REPORT RESUMES

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AN EXPLORATION OF CASEWORKERS' PERCEPTIONS OF ADOPTIVE APPLICANTS. FINAL REPORT.

BY- BRADLEY, TRUDY

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THE PURPOSES OF THIS STUDY WERE TO IDENTIFY THE CRITERIA USED BY ADOPTION WORKERS IN THEIR EVALUATION OF ADOPTIVE APPLICATIONS, TO DISCOVER WHETHER CASEWORKERS HAVE VARIOUS APPLICANT MODELS FOR DIFFERENT GROUPS OF CHILDREN, AND TO EXPLORE ATTRIBUTES OR ATTITUDES DIFFERENTIATING ACCEPTED AND REJECTED COUPLES. THREE PUBLIC AND FIVE PRIVATE AGENCIES IN A LARGE EASTERN METROPOLITAN AREA PARTICIPATED IN THE PROJECT. APPROXIMATELY 400 PARENT COUPLES, 50 FROM EACH AGENCY, WERE INTERVIEWED BY 87 SOCIAL WORKERS IN THE EIGHT AGENCIES. THE 102-ITEM CASEWORKER'S RATING FORM FOR ADOPTIVE PARENTS WAS EVOLVED, PRETESTED, AND REVISED IN CONSULTATION WITH PROFESSIONALS IN THE ADOPTION FIELD. IT WAS CONCLUDED THAT CASEWORKERS WERE DISCRIMINATING BUT THE RANGE WITHIN WHICH THEY MADE THEIR JUDGMENTS WAS NARROW. THEREFORE THEIR ABILITY TO PREDICT CAPACITY TO FILL THE PARENTAL ROLE WAS QUESTIONED. THREE CHARACTERISTICS OF COUPLES SEEMED TO BE RELATED TO THEIR ACCEPTANCE BY CASEWORKERS--A POSITIVE OVERALL EFFECT, SUITABILITY FOR A DEVIANT CHILD, AND YOUTH AND A RELATIVELY RECENT MARRIAGE. COUPLES WERE JUDGED TO BE OVERALL POSITIVE, MARGINAL, OR POOR OR UNACCEPTABLE. THOSE COUPLES ASSESSED AS "BETTER" WERE AWARDED "BETTER" CHILDREN, AND THOSE WHO WERE "MARGINAL" WERE AWARDED MARGINAL OR DEVIANT CHILDREN. IT WAS RECOMMENDED THAT A REPLICATION OF THE STUDY BE DONE AND THAT SOME OF THE FINDINGS BE VALIDATED. SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH, TABULAR INFORMATION ON DIFFERENT FACETS OF THE ADOPTIVE PROCESS, THE CASEWORKER'S RATING FORM FOR ADOPTIVE APPLICANTS, AND A BIBLIOGRAPHY ARE INCLUDED. THIS DOCUMENT IS AVAILABLE FOR $3.60 FROM CHILD WELFARE LEAGUE OF AMERICA, INC., 44 EAST 23RD STREET, NEW YORK, NEW YORK 10010. (FP)

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an exploration of caseworkers' perceptions of adoptive applicants

Trudy Bradley, D.S.W.

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Trudy Bradley, D.S.W.

Final Report Project No. R-4
U.S. Children's Bureau
Department of Health, Education, and Welfare

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Background

During 1963, about 44,400 adoptions in the United States were arranged by social agencies. This figure represents about two-thirds of all adoptions by nonrelatives for that year. When compared to national estimates for the previous year, 1962, agency adoptions increased at a faster rate than did nonrelative adoptions as a whole.[1] Although we did not have the figures for 1963 for the state in which the study was completed, some approximation of the parameters was possible. Of the estimated total of 4,980 nonrelative adoptions between July 1963 and 1964,[2] approximately 4,000 were agency placements.[3] In 1963 approximately 3,680 of the state's adoptions were completed by social agencies. We were unable to obtain data on total nonrelative adoptions for the metropolitan area in this study, but noted from the estimate of the State Department of Social Welfare that the total number of adoptions arranged by agencies in 1964 was about 1,800, whereas in 1963 the total came to about 1,710.[1]

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[1] U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, Adoptions in 1963, Welfare Administration, Children's Bureau, October 1964.

[2] Private communication from the agency which handles court statistics in the state in which the study was completed.

[3] U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, Facts About Children: Adoptions in the United States, Welfare Administration, Children's Bureau, 1963. Although the date bases here differed, since the last figure refers to the full calendar year 1964, discussions with the publishers of these data led us to doubt that there would have been major differences had the same date base been reported.

Thus on national, state, and city levels adoption agencies have each year played an increasingly prominent role in adoptive placements of children with nonrelatives. Hylton's study[2] also stresses the growing importance of social agencies on the adoption scene, as revealed in her data about the rising number of children available for adoption, the expanding number of applicants to agencies, and the growth of agency placements completed during a recent four year period.

Such an increase on all fronts is a reflection of the growing acceptance, within our society, of adoption as a means of creating families. It also highlights the growth of a philosophy, summarized in the Child Welfare League of America's standards for adoption service, that "for children who cannot have the care of their natural parents--not only infants but also older children, children with handicaps, and children of minority groups--adoption is considered the most desirable means of ensuring family life."[1] In like manner, focusing on mental health concepts, Bernard has emphasized that "adoption can offer one of the soundest and happiest solutions to emotional problems resulting from frustrated basic needs of parentless children, childless parents, and those who cannot fulfill the role of parent for the children they have borne."[2]

---

[1] State Department of Social Welfare, Office of Social Research and Statistics, mimeographed reports, June 1964 and 1965.

[2] Hylton, L. F., "Trends in Adoption, 1958-1962," Child Welfare, July 1965, pp. 377-386.

The social agency, as an institutional unit of society, has therefore increasingly borne the responsibility of consummating the adoptive parent-child relationship, in keeping with these philosophical and conceptual trends. In line with such a responsibility, there has emerged in the field a concern with refining the level of professional practice. One such approach has sought to advance knowledge about the nature of decision-making in adoption practice in relation to both child placement and parent selection.

The focus of the research reported in the pages that follow is related to the problem of parent assessment and selection. The decision to study the factors that enter into social workers' assessments of adoptive applicants was made at a time when the investigator was working on a questionnaire to be used in assessing couples who had adopted American Indian children, a project then in progress at the Child Welfare League of America.[1] While reviewing some of the literature in this area and pondering over the problems of constructing an instrument to be used with couples who had adopted children who were in the "hard-to-place" category, the investigator was struck by the scarcity of research completed in the field of adoptive parent assessment, a dearth most recently stressed by Mech.[2] It also became quite clear that prior to such a restricted focus on one special group of adoptive couples there was need for a more basic consideration of the factors entering into social workers' assessments of adoptive applicants in general.

---

[1] Standards for Adoption Service, New York: Child Welfare League of America, 1959, p. 1.

[2] Bernard, V. W., "Adoption," in The Encyclopedia of Mental Health, Volume I, Franklin Watts, Inc., 1963, p. 70.

Decision Making in Adoption

Kadushin[3] has conceptualized the adoptive selection process by likening it to an occupational application, in this case an application for the "job" of parent. "The ultimate decision about his application, however, is made by the social worker who controls the acess to adoptive children."

---

[1] Fanshel, D., "The Indian Adoption Research Project," Child Welfare, Vol. XLIII, No. 9, 1964, pp. 486-488.

[2] Mech, E., "Child Welfare Research: A Review and Critique," Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science, Vol. 355, September 1964, pp. 23-24.

[3] Kadushin, A., "A Study of Adoptive Parents of Hard-to-Place Children," Social Casework, Vol. XLIII, No. 5, 1962, p. 227.

The social worker in an adoption agency is therefore faced with a difficult task. His search is for a "good" family, one that can provide a certain standard of care for its children and possessing the ability to sustain the potential stresses, and what Kirk[1] has described as handicaps, of the adoptive role. Confronted by an applicant, crucial decisions must be made, affecting the life of a child, the welfare of the adoptive applicant, the agency's status and the worker's own professional integrity.

In a recent publication, Fanshel[2] notes that the issue of what constitutes the ingredients of a good or bad parent, when relevant literature is examined, is still a relatively open one. When the adoption role is added into the fabric of parenthood, the question becomes even more complex.

As Shapiro[3] commented almost ten years ago, "developing and using criteria to evaluate the capacity for parenthood have been matters of concern to agencies for a long time." A body of literature has grown up, based upon clinical experience, in which practitioners have set forth some general areas that adoption workers need to explore in the process of applicant evaluation. For instance, the Child Welfare League of America Committee on Standards[1] notes the importance of the following areas for study by the adoption worker: 1) the total personality of the applicants, 2) their emotional maturity, 3) the quality of the marital relationship, 4) their feeling about children, 5) their feeling about childlessness and their readiness to adopt, and 6) their motivation. Brown,[2] in a similar listing, stresses 1) the personal adjustment of each of the prospective parents, 2) the couple's relationship to each other, 3) the couple's relationship to their own parents and siblings, 4) their expressed and their deeper motives in seeking a child, 5) their reasons for not having their own child, 6) their attitude toward childlessness and toward infertility, 7) their ability to accept an adopted child, and 8) their understanding of children and their needs. A variety of other publications, including some emanating from research, could be mentioned[3] but seem, on the whole, to overlap with the writings already noted.

---

[1] Kirk, H.D., Shared Fate, London: The Free Press of Glencoe, Collier-Macmillan Limited, 1964.

[2] Fanshel, D., "Approaches to Measuring Adjustment in Adoptive Applicants," in Quantitative Approaches to Parent Selection, New York: Child Welfare League of America, 1962, pp. 18-35.

[3] Shapiro, M., A Study of Adoption Practice, Vol. I, New York: Child Welfare League of America, 1956, p. 80.

---

[1] Standards for Adoption Service, op. cit., pp. 38-39.

[2] Brown, F. L., "What Do We Seek in Adoptive Parents?" in Adoption Principles and Services, New York: Family Service Association of America, 1951, pp. 1-7.

[3] Bernard, V. W., op. cit., pp. 86-87; Shapiro, M., op. cit., pp. 79-81; Wittenborn, J. R., The Placement of Adoptive Children, Springfield, Illinois: Charles C. Thomas, 1957; Maas, H. S. and Engler, R. E., Children in Need of Parents, New York: Columbia University Press, 1959; Simon, A. J., "Evaluation of Adoptive Parents," in Shapiro, M., A Study of Adoption Practice, Vol. II, New York: Child Welfare League of America, 1956, pp. 160-163; National Conference of Catholic Charities, Adoption Practices in Catholic Agencies, Washington, D. C. 1957.

These then, are the general dimensions that emerge from a perusal of the practice and research literature. But left unanswered are a number of important questions. Are the standards cited above in accord with the criteria that are actually utilized in practice, and if so, how are they operative? What are the perceptual dimensions underlying caseworker assessments of applicant couples? Are these dimensions broad holistic constructs, or are the assessments based on discrete discriminations? Do caseworkers have different applicant models for different kinds of children? Do agencies differ with respect to their assessment tendencies?

Questions such as these, which we wanted to investigate, led us to make inquiry about what sort of information is used by the adoption worker in his day-to-day practice in order to make a decision about the quality of adoptive couples, a judgment that ultimately influences an agency's decision to accept or reject such applicants. During the course of any study the worker is apt to make judgments in many areas, all adding up to his final, global evaluation. For instance:

- How strong is the couple's desire to adopt?
- Do the attitudes of significant others in this couple's life space make a difference?
- What is the meaning of the applicant's preference or lack of preference for certain attributes in the child?

- What motivates them to seek adoption, and how is it to be evaluated?

- What is their reaction to their infertility? Do they feel either disgraced, or embarrassed, or inadequate, or what?

- How do they feel about illegitimacy?

- What are the couple's social characteristics? How does their socioeconomic level affect their expectations about a child?

- What are their feelings about themselves and their spouse? Are they dependent, self-doubting, self-critical?

- What role does each potential parent assume in the marriage? How is aggression handled? How is affection expressed? How stable is the marriage?

- How are they most likely to interact with a child? How demanding might they be? How protective? How restrictive?

- What is this couple's vulnerability to some of the potential stressful consequences of parenthood, such as loss of sleep, less leisure time, less time alone together?

These are but a few of the items that may enter into any evaluation. Which of these or other dimensions of individual or family functioning have a positive or negative valence in assessing couples' potential for adoptive parenthood? What are some attributes or attitudes that are likely to differentiate among accepted and rejected couples, and which ones seem to make little difference?

Although decision making by caseworkers was considered far

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an exploration of caseworkers' perceptions of adoptive applicants

Trudy Bradley, D.S.W.

ERRATA

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ERRATA

The following are pages that were omitted from Appendix B in the photo-offset process. In the original copy, these pages appeared on the reverse sides of those in the Appendix. For example, page 205a appeared on the reverse side of page 205, before page 206.

9. Age:

HUSBAND	WIFE
a. 1 ☐ 20-24	b. 1 ☐ 20-24
2 ☐ 25-29	2 ☐ 25-29
3 ☐ 30-34	3 ☐ 30-34
4 ☐ 35-39	4 ☐ 35-39
5 ☐ 40-44	5 ☐ 40-44
6 ☐ 45-49	6 ☐ 45-49
7 ☐ 50-54	7 ☐ 50-54
8 ☐ Other	8 ☐ Other

10. Birthplace:

a. 1 ☐ New York City and suburbs	b. 1 ☐ New York City and suburbs
2 ☐ Other U. S.: rural and small towns	2 ☐ Other U. S.: rural and small towns
3 ☐ Other U. S.: urban	3 ☐ Other U. S.: urban
4 ☐ Foreign born: rural and small towns	4 ☐ Foreign born: rural and small towns
5 ☐ Foreign born: urban	5 ☐ Foreign born: urban

11. Highest educational level reached:

a. 1 ☐ Grade school, not completed	b. 1 ☐ Grade school, not completed
2 ☐ Grade school graduate	2 ☐ Grade school graduate
3 ☐ High school, not completed	3 ☐ High school, not completed
4 ☐ High school graduate	4 ☐ High school graduate
5 ☐ College, not completed	5 ☐ College, not completed
6 ☐ College graduate	6 ☐ College graduate
7 ☐ Graduate training, no degree	7 ☐ Graduate training, no degree
8 ☐ Graduate degree	8 ☐ Graduate degree
9 ☐ Vocational training after high school	9 ☐ Vocational training after high school

12. Graduate or professional degrees received:

a. ______________________ b. ______________________

13. Present occupation:

a. ______________________ b. ______________________

14. If not now employed, what was her last occupation? ______________

15. Income before taxes: (CHECK APPROPRIATE GROUPING):

a. 1 ☐ None	b. 1 ☐ None
2 ☐ Under $2, 500	2 ☐ Under $2, 500
3 ☐ 2, 500 to 4, 999	3 ☐ 2, 500 to 4, 999
4 ☐ 5, 000 to 9, 999	4 ☐ 5, 000 to 9, 999
5 ☐ 10, 000 to 14, 999	5 ☐ 10, 000 to 14, 999
6 ☐ 15, 000 to 19, 999	6 ☐ 15, 000 to 19, 999
7 ☐ 20, 000 to 24, 999	7 ☐ 20, 000 to 24, 999
8 ☐ Over 25, 000	8 ☐ Over 25, 000

21. Children in Family:

Check one of following:

	Sex	Age	Own child (present marriage)	Own child (previous marriage)	Adopted Child
a.	______	______	☐	☐	☐
b.	______	______	☐	☐	☐
c.	______	______	☐	☐	☐
d.	______	______	☐	☐	☐

PLEASE PLACE AN ASTERISK next to any child listed above who is not currently living in the home.

22. Housing:

1 ☐ Own a house
2 ☐ Rent a house
3 ☐ Own an apartment
4 ☐ Rent an apartment

23. They live in (CHECK ONE):

1 ☐ A large city
2 ☐ A medium sized city
3 ☐ A small city
4 ☐ A large town or village
5 ☐ A medium sized town or village
6 ☐ A small town or village
7 ☐ A rural area

24. Is wife an "only child"? Yes ☐ 1 No ☐ 2

25. Is husband an "only child"? Yes ☐ 1 No ☐ 2

26. If "No", how many siblings did they have? (PLEASE CIRCLE)

Husband:						Wife:					
a. Brothers	1	2	3	4	5	c. Brothers	1	2	3	4	5
b. Sisters	1	2	3	4	5	d. Sisters	1	2	3	4	5

27. Wife's ordinal position (IF FIRST BORN, CIRCLE 1): 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

28. Husband's ordinal position (IF FIRST BORN, CIRCLE 1): 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

29. If not an "only child", which sibling seemed to be favored most by their parents? (PLEASE CHECK)

Husband's Family:	Wife's Family:
1 ☐ The Husband	1 ☐ The Wife
2 ☐ Another sibling	2 ☐ Another sibling
3 ☐ Equal favor to all	3 ☐ Equal favor to all

36. To whom did each member of the couple feel closest during their growing up years? (CHECK ONE unless the person felt equally close to more than one person, IN WHICH CASE CHECK MORE THAN ONE):

a. **Husband**		b. **Wife**
1 ☐	Own father	☐ 1
2 ☐	Own mother	☐ 2
3 ☐	A sibling	☐ 3
4 ☐	Another relative	☐ 4
5 ☐	Other (SPECIFY): ____________	☐ 5

____

37. Do they still feel closest to the same person(s)?

a. Husband: Yes ☐ 1 No ☐ 2 b. Wife: Yes ☐ 1 No ☐ 2

a. If "No", please specify: ____________________________

38. Would you say that either spouse has had a very strong attachment to either one or both of his/her parents?

a. **Husband**		b. **Wife**
1 ☐	No	☐ 1
2 ☐	Yes, to his/her father	☐ 2
3 ☐	Yes, to his/her mother	☐ 3
4 ☐	Yes, to both father and mother	☐ 4

39. To what extent has either spouse experienced difficulties in any of the areas below? Next to EACH area, PLEASE CIRCLE THE NUMBER THAT APPLIES:

Very much so:	1
Moderately so:	2
Mildly so:	3
Probably not:	4

a. **Husband**		b. **Wife**
1 2 3 4	Difficulty in school	1 2 3 4
1 2 3 4	Difficulty in peer relationships	1 2 3 4
1 2 3 4	Difficulty in sibling relationships	1 2 3 4
1 2 3 4	Difficulty in vocational choice	1 2 3 4
1 2 3 4	Difficulty in regard to some physical disability	1 2 3 4

40. How many friends did each member of the couple have as a child during growing years?

a. **Husband**		b. **Wife**
1 ☐	Relatively few friends	☐ 1
2 ☐	About average number of friends	☐ 2
3 ☐	More friendships than most children	☐ 3

Below are some questions about the physical status of this couple specifically related to their adoption application. PLEASE ANSWER FOR ALL COUPLES:

48. What is the medical reason for their inability to have children of their own?

1 ☐ Husband infertile (SPECIFY): ____________________
2 ☐ Wife infertile (SPECIFY): ____________________
3 ☐ Both husband and wife infertile (SPECIFY): ____________________
____
4 ☐ Repeated miscarriages
5 ☐ Repeated stillbirths
6 ☐ Failure to conceive but cause of infertility unclear
7 ☐ Does not apply: have children of their own
8 ☐ Other (SPECIFY): ____________________
____
____

49. Considering the medical reports available on this couple, what are their prospects for having their own baby (PLEASE CHECK):

1 ☐ Possible
2 ☐ Doubtful
3 ☐ Impossible
4 ☐ Inadvisable
5 ☐ Other (SPECIFY): ____________________

PLEASE ANSWER THE FOLLOWING FOR INITIAL (FIRST) APPLICATIONS ONLY:

50. How much time elapsed between confirmation of inability to have a child and the couple's initial contact with the agency?

1 ☐ Less than 6 months
2 ☐ 6 months to 1 year
3 ☐ 1-2 years
4 ☐ Over 2 years
5 ☐ Other (SPECIFY): ____________________

51. For how long was medical advice sought?

1 ☐ Less than 6 months
2 ☐ 6 months to 1 year
3 ☐ 1-2 years
4 ☐ Over 2 years
5 ☐ Other (SPECIFY): ____________________

52. Do you have any question or concern about the way in which this couple has gone about seeking medical advice, the extent to which they have sought to overcome infertility, etc.? Yes ☐ 1 No ☐ 2

a. If "Yes", PLEASE SPECIFY: ____________________
____
____
____

58. To what extent does the couple have concrete plans for the care of a child in relation to housing, physical care, budgeting? (CHECK EACH COLUMN):

a. Housing	b. Budgeting, Financial	c. Physical Caretaking	
1 ☐	1 ☐	1 ☐	Adequate plans
2 ☐	2 ☐	2 ☐	Moderately adequate plans
3 ☐	3 ☐	3 ☐	Inadequate plans

Attributes of Child Sought for in Adoption

59. What was this couple's stated preference with respect to the age of the child they desire to adopt? (We refer here to initial preferences, not the changes that may have occurred during the course of the study.) PLEASE CHECK:

HUSBAND	WIFE
a. 1 ☐ Under 3 months	b. 1 ☐ Under 3 months
2 ☐ Up to 6 months	2 ☐ Up to 6 months
3 ☐ Up to 1 year	3 ☐ Up to 1 year
4 ☐ Up to 2 years	4 ☐ Up to 2 years
5 ☐ Up to 3 years	5 ☐ Up to 3 years
6 ☐ Up to 5 years	6 ☐ Up to 5 years
7 ☐ Over 5 years	7 ☐ Over 5 years
8 ☐ No preference	8 ☐ No preference

60. What was the strength of their preference? (PLEASE CHECK)

a. 1 ☐ Strong preference	b. 1 ☐ Strong preference
2 ☐ Moderate preference	2 ☐ Moderate preference
3 ☐ Mild preference	3 ☐ Mild preference
4 ☐ No preference	4 ☐ No preference

61. Please state any changes that may have occurred during the course of the study in the wife's and/or husband's preference as to age of the child:

a. 1 ☐ No change occurred	b. 1 ☐ No change occurred
2 ☐ Change: more willing to accept older child than at first	2 ☐ Change: more willing to accept older child than at first
3 ☐ Change: more willing to accept younger child than at first	3 ☐ Change: more willing to accept younger child than at first
4 ☐ Other (SPECIFY): ____________ ____________________	4 ☐ Other (SPECIFY): ____________ ____________________

66. Would you please estimate the degree to which the following motivations apply to the husband and wife that you have interviewed. PLEASE CIRCLE THE APPROPRIATE NUMBER in the spaces provided. Note that EVERY motivation should be circled according to the degree that applies.

Very much so: 1
Moderately so: 2
Mildly so: 3
Probably not: 4

a. Husband		b. Wife
1 2 3 4	Motivation based on intrinsic liking for children (implies loving children for themselves, depth of feeling for children, etc.).	1 2 3 4
1 2 3 4	Motivation based on couple's notion that motherhood is the only suitable role for the wife.	1 2 3 4
1 2 3 4	Motivation based on need to "keep up with the Joneses" (motivation based mainly on need for status in their own group).	1 2 3 4
1 2 3 4	Motivation based on notion that the marriage would tend to suffer from absence of children (e. g., go somewhat stale, dry).	1 2 3 4
1 2 3 4	Motivation based on desire for companionship later in life.	1 2 3 4
1 2 3 4	Motivation based primarily on neurotic needs (for instance, using child to make up for many lacks in their own life)	1 2 3 4
1 2 3 4	Motivation related to the fact that either spouse stems from a family background where childlessness is not really an acceptable state (makes them feel uncomfortably different).	1 2 3 4
1 2 3 4	Motivation based on desire to hold the marriage together (implies using child as a cementing agent).	1 2 3 4
1 2 3 4	Motivation based on desire to have a companion for other child or children already in the home.	1 2 3 4
1 2 3 4	Motivation based on identification with the underdog, for instance, feeling it unfair that any child not have a mother and father.	1 2 3 4
1 2 3 4	Other (PLEASE SPECIFY)________________ ______________________________ ______________________________	1 2 3 4

71. If responsibility for the couple's childlessness is inappropriately (falsely) assumed by either or both members, please specify: ______________

____

____

72. Adoptive applicants have a variety of feelings about unmarried mothers. What, in your judgment, describes this couple's feelings most adequately? FOLLOWING EACH STATEMENT, PLEASE CIRCLE THE NUMBER THAT APPLIES MOST CLOSELY TO EACH SPOUSE:

Very much so: 1
Moderately so: 2
Mildly so: 3
Probably not: 4

a. Husband		b. Wife
1 2 3 4	Seems never to have given much thought to the subject of unmarried motherhood.	1 2 3 4
1 2 3 4	Seems to have a "better-than-thou" attitude about unmarried mothers.	1 2 3 4
1 2 3 4	Is able to identify with the problems facing the unmarried mother.	1 2 3 4
1 2 3 4	Is reproachful toward unmarried mothers.	1 2 3 4
1 2 3 4	Has ambivalent feelings about unmarried mothers.	1 2 3 4
1 2 3 4	Seems to sympathize with unmarried mothers.	1 2 3 4
1 2 3 4	Is vindictive or punitive on the subject of unmarried motherhood.	1 2 3 4
1 2 3 4	Has a cosmopolitan attitude about unmarried mothers (accepts the idea but is not particularly involved).	1 2 3 4

We would like to get from you some estimate of this couple's attitude about sharing adoption information with a child.

73. Does the couple have misgivings about telling a child of his adoption?

1 ☐ Great misgivings
2 ☐ Some misgivings
3 ☐ No misgivings

74. At what age would they favor telling a child of his adoption?

1 ☐ Before age 3 years
2 ☐ Between 3-5
3 ☐ Between 5-7
4 ☐ Between 7-9
5 ☐ Other (SPECIFY): ______________________________

81. Regarding the social characteristics of this couple, what is your estimate of the degree to which they have the following characteristics. PLEASE CIRCLE THE NUMBER THAT APPLIES:

	Very Much So	Moderately So	Mildly So	Probably Not
a. Couple is economically stable.	1	2	3	4
b. Couple is involved in community programs and activities	1	2	3	4
c. Couple engages in organized religious activities	1	2	3	4
d. Couple places value on education	1	2	3	4
e. Couple desirous of moving up the social ladder	1	2	3	4
f. Couple engages in "extra-curricular" activities outside the home (recreation, hobbies, etc.)	1	2	3	4
g. Couple maintains close ties with extended family members (aunts, uncles, nieces, etc.)	1	2	3	4
h. Couple emphasizes democratic relationships among family members (equalitarian focus, emphasize self-determination, everyone has a voice in decisions made, etc.).	1	2	3	4
i. Couple tends to be reticent about using major cultural institutions such as museums, theatre, concerts, etc. .	1	2	3	4
j. Family household is efficient, well organized.	1	2	3	4
k. Couple places stress upon social conformity	1	2	3	4
l. One would think of this couple as having a wide circle of friends.	1	2	3	4
m. Couple tends to be politically active	1	2	3	4
n. Husband tends to be more involved in business than family affairs	1	2	3	4

83. **Below are a list of phrases that are sometimes used to describe one person's relationship to another. FOLLOWING EACH STATEMENT, PLEASE CIRCLE THE NUMBER THAT, in your clinical judgment, comes closest to your assessment of this couple's manner of relating to each other:**

Very much so: 1
Moderately so: 2
Mildly so: 3
Probably not: 4

a. Husband		**b. Wife**
1 2 3 4	**Tends to be openly critical (fault-finding) of spouse**	1 2 3 4
1 2 3 4	**Tends to relate in a dependent manner to spouse**	1 2 3 4
1 2 3 4	**Tends to be assertive and the dominant figure in the relationship**	1 2 3 4
1 2 3 4	**Tends to be self-doubting and quite unsure of self with spouse**	1 2 3 4
1 2 3 4	**Seeks to take on a protective role**	1 2 3 4
1 2 3 4	**Tends to be gentle but firm in asserting self**	1 2 3 4
1 2 3 4	**Seeks out spouse as source of approval**	1 2 3 4

84. **Of the following, PLEASE CHECK THE STATEMENT THAT, in your judgment, is most descriptive of this couple when you think of the roles that each assumes within the marriage:**

1 ☐ **The husband and wife tend to assume the traditional roles in their relationship to each other.**

2 ☐ **There is no clear division of roles by this couple; an equalitarian principle seems to operate.**

3 ☐ **Many of the traditional male and female roles seem to be reversed in this couple's relationship.**

86. In your interviews was there any discussion of this couple's past and/or current sexual adjustment? Yes ☐ 1 No ☐ 2

87. If "Yes", did they mention any concerns or difficulties? What were they?

____

____

____

____

88. In evaluating this couple's marital relationship, do you consider such concerns or difficulties significant?

1 ☐ Very significant
2 ☐ Moderately significant
3 ☐ Mildly significant
4 ☐ Probably not significant

89. Has this couple's pattern of sexual behavior been affected by their knowledge of infertility and/or inability to have children? Yes ☐ 1 No ☐ 2

90. If "Yes", please specify: ____________________________

____

____

____

91. What, would you say, is the most likely way that this couple reacts to conflicts, arguments, or differences between them? Next to EACH STATEMENT PLEASE CIRCLE THE NUMBER THAT APPLIES:

	Very much so	Moderately so	Mildly so	Probably not
a. They have frequent arguments, differences, etc.	1	2	3	4
b. Usually their arguments, differences, etc. are intense. .	1	2	3	4
c. Their arguments, differences, etc. often result in lengthy breaks in communication.	1	2	3	4
d. Their arguments, differences, etc. are usually handled by open discussion between them	1	2	3	4
e. They say that their arguments, differences, etc. tend to be over minor trifles.	1	2	3	4

92. When you think of the interaction of this couple, would you say that they are (CHECK ONE):

1 ☐ Very affectionate toward each other and display this openly
2 ☐ Very affectionate toward each other but do not display this openly
3 ☐ Moderately affectionate toward each other
4 ☐ Less than average in their affection toward each other
5 ☐ Reserved in their outward interaction so that it is difficult to assess the amount of affection between them
6 ☐ Other (PLEASE SPECIFY): ____________________________

93. What would you be inclined to say about the stability of this marriage?

1 ☐ Above average in stability
2 ☐ Average in stability
3 ☐ Below average in stability

95. Do you feel that the couple is at all suitable for a child? Yes ☐1 No ☐2

If "Yes", please answer the following:

96. We are interested in your judgment about the suitability of this particular couple for various kinds of children that may come to an agency for adoptive placement. Disregarding the children actually available at your agency at present or in the future, and disregarding community attitudes, PLEASE CHECK one of the four categories to indicate your general disposition regarding the suitability of the couple for each type of child. We are interested here in your assessment of the couple, which may or may not agree with what the couple has stated. BE SURE TO CHECK ONE CATEGORY FOLLOWING EACH STATEMENT.

	The couple is very suitable for this kind of child.	The couple is fairly suitable for this kind of child.	The couple is not really suitable for this kind of child but I would select them if others are unavailable.	The couple is not suitable for this kind of child and I would never place such a child with them.
a. An infant suffering from colic	☐	☐	☐	☐
b. A child with mental illness in his immediate family background	☐	☐	☐	☐
c. An Oriental child.	☐	☐	☐	☐
d. An infant with a noticeable birthmark on his face	☐	☐	☐	☐
e. A child of a mixed American Indian-White background	☐	☐	☐	☐
f. A child with much anti-social behavior in his immediate background	☐	☐	☐	☐
g. A child whose skin color is noticeably different from their own	☐	☐	☐	☐
h. An Italian child	☐	☐	☐	☐
i. A child of a mixed Negro-White background who looks white	☐	☐	☐	☐
j. A child of a mixed Negro-White background who looks dark	☐	☐	☐	☐
k. A child with a cleft pallate	☐	☐	☐	☐
l. A child whose natural parents are below average intellectually.	☐	☐	☐	☐
m. An American Indian child	☐	☐	☐	☐
n. A child with a family history of diabetes. .	☐	☐	☐	☐
o. A child of mixed Oriental-White background	☐	☐	☐	☐

(continued)

98. We are interested in assessing the degree of "home-centeredness" of the wife when compared to her interests outside of the home (work, recreation, civic activities, etc.). PLEASE CHECK THE STATEMENT BELOW that most applies to the wife, as you see her functioning at present (left hand column), and as you see her functioning if the agency places a child in the home (right hand column). PLEASE CHECK ONCE IN EACH COLUMN:

a. Current Functioning		b. Future Functioning
1 ☐	The home is the only thing that matters to this woman. It is her prime concern. She is content to be at home most of her time.	☐ 1
2 ☐	The home is very important to this woman. She does have interests outside the home but they "take a back-seat".	☐2
3 ☐	The home and outside interests are of equal importance, and she tends to divide her time equally among both.	☐3
4 ☐	Outside interests are somewhat more important to this woman than is the home. She becomes restless when confined to the home, and probably wishes she could get out more often.	☐4
5 ☐	Outside interests are of prime concern to this woman. She makes strong efforts to be out of the home regularly	☐5

99. We are interested in assessing the behavior of this couple in the interview situation, how they related to each other and to you. PLEASE CIRCLE THE NUMBER that comes closest to your assessment of this couple.

Very much so: 1
Moderately so: 2
Mildly so: 3
Probably not: 4

a. Husband		b. Wife
1 2 3 4	Was at ease in sharing information about self	1 2 3 4
1 2 3 4	Tended to share information in response to questions rather than volunteering it	1 2 3 4
1 2 3 4	Was revealing and open about the marital relationship	1 2 3 4
1 2 3 4	Was able to see potential limitations in self as a parent	1 2 3 4
1 2 3 4	Tended to "put best foot forward" with the worker	1 2 3 4
1 2 3 4	Seemed to use agency contact as a means of increasing his/her own understanding of self and of children	1 2 3 4
1 2 3 4	Expressed negative feelings about adoption agencies in general	1 2 3 4
1 2 3 4	Was flexible in planning and keeping appointment(s)	1 2 3 4
1 2 3 4	Tended to be guarded in dealing with the worker	1 2 3 4

from capricious, studies completed by Brieland,[1] Wolins,[2] and Fanshel[3] have suggested a lack of clarity about the characteristics to be looked for in applicants for the adoptive parent or foster parent role. This was demonstrated by the uneven reliability shown by workers when confronted with the research task of differentiating among couples being considered by agencies. Whether judgments have been made on the basis of caseworkers listening to tape records of interviews, reading prepared case record material, or through face-to-face contact with the subjects, the decision making process has become subject to a variety of questions that we believe warrants further exploration.

In the process of completing an adoption study a worker gathers much information. But how much of this material is actually used in coming to a decision? Possibly workers quickly make a judgment about an applicant, and tend to foreclose with respect to further information, as suggested by Brieland.[4] To what extent does a halo effect operate? In other words, is there a tendency to "package" the myriad impressions of an applicant?[1]

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[1] Brieland, D., An Experimental Study of the Selection of Adoptive Parents at Intake, New York: Child Welfare League of America, 1959.

[2] Wolins, M., "The Problem of Choice in Foster Home Finding," Social Work, Vol. 4, No. 4 , 1959, pp. 40-48.

[3] Fanshel, D., "Studying the Role Performance of Foster Parents," Social Work, Vol. 6, No. 1, pp. 74-81.

[4] Brieland, D., op. cit.

As we have noted, the adoption study presents a situation where a single worker is largely responsible for making a variety of judgments based on his perceptions of interviewees. In other words, as Wolins points out, the impact of communication is in part a function of the content of information obtained from applicants, but it is also a function of the receiver, namely, the worker who is in the position of rendering a judgment. "The meaning of communicated material is influenced by the reference groups from which the judge takes his cues and by his competence. The two are not unrelated, but may be considered separately."[2] Bruner and Tagiuri[3] summarize the findings of a number of studies and underscore how much of what a person sees and how he sees it is determined by the cultural orientation of the individual. Hence it can be assumed that cultural factors will affect social workers in their choice of criteria for the selection of couples for adoptive parenthood.

Wolins takes the position that the cultural orientations of social workers and the professional views derived from training are mutually reinforcing.[1] Social workers are seen as predominantly middle class,[2] and "this frame of reference is supported by the social systems' ideology, by the worker's training, by the literature, and by supervision.[3]

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[1] Bruner, J. and Tagiuri, R., "The Perception of People," in Lindzey, G. (ed.), Handbook of Social Psychology, Reading, Massachusetts: Addison-Wesley Publishing Co., 1954, pp. 634-654.

[2] Wolins, M., Selecting Foster Parents, New York and London: Columbia University Press, 1963, p. 59.

[3] Bruner, J. and Tagiuri, R., *op. cit.*, pp. 640-649.

A perusal of the literature suggests that reference group reinforcement is likely to increase agreement.[4] Although adoption staffs can be viewed in terms of a variety of reference groups, the most relevant to our research would seem to be the adoption agency or service of which the staff is a part. It might follow, then, that a given agency builds up a culture of its own, via the initial selection of staff and subsequent reinforcement by the group. We wondered whether and how this might affect rating tendencies in different agencies.

In everyday practice, the worker is not faced by a situation allowing infinite choices. Within the realm of available applicants, he attempts to reject as few "good" homes and accept as few "bad" homes as possible. It seems likely that the direction in which the worker and/or agency is prepared to err will vary according to the supply of good homes and the number of children that need placement. Given a favorable ratio of applicants to the number of children available for placement (as is true, in general, of the Caucasian group in adoption), it is possible that the selection process could be likened to what Wolins has called "a form of 'skimming': the direction of choice is simply from the 'very best' end of the continuum, and never enters the risk area."[1] On the other hand, when the ratio of applicants to children is low (as in the case of certain ethnic groups), the worker may be more willing to invade the risk area in judgments about applicants with regard to their suitability for adoptive parenthood.

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[1] Wolins, M., op. cit., pp. 59-60.

[2] Polansky, N., et.al., "Social Workers in Society: Results of a Sampling Study," Social Work Journal, 1953, 34, pp. 74-80.

[3] Wolins, M., op. cit., p. 57.

[4] Riecken, H. W., and Homans, G. C., "Psychological Aspects of Social Structure," in Lindzey, G. (ed.), Handbook of Social Psychology, op. cit., pp. 786-832.

A related, but broader, question that arises is the extent to which evaluations of applicants for the so-called "normal" youngster differ from assessments about the suitability of applicants for particular groups of children, varying in family background, ethnicity, physical status, emotional adjustment, and so on. The focus here is on the variation among criteria, when related to the child allocation task faced by agencies. For instance, it is possible to locate variables in the selection process that are indicators of applicants' judged suitability to take on a handicapped child, or a racially mixed child?

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[1] Wolins, M., op. cit., pp. 44-45.

Does variation among criteria imply a "lowering" of standards, or are different standards actually involved? The findings of Maas[1] and Kadushin,[2] in studies based on case record analyses, suggested that standards for this group were lower.

It would seem to this investigator that the child welfare field lacks an adequate picture of the characteristics of adoptive applicants that are perceived as desirable for the care of children with special needs. This gap is of particular concern in view of the notion advanced by some practitioners that the lack of adoptive homes for so-called hard-to-place children may often be the result of the inhibitions and misconceptions of professional caseworkers rather than the resistances of the applicants themselves. In line with this, Maas notes that "our evidence on the initial expectations, at intake, of all our adoptive parents indicated more frequent parental tolerances for difference in adoptive children than indicated by the agencies' placement of adoptive children who were different."[3]

The Selection Process and Public Relations

Almost ten years ago, Joseph H. Reid noted that "no field of practice in social work is more before the public, more sensitive, or more

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[1] Maas H. S., "The Successful Adoptive Parent Applicant," Social Work, Vol. 5, No. 1, 1960, pp. 14-21.

[2] Kadushin, A., op. cit.

[3] Maas, H. S., op. cit., p. 20.

controversial than adoption."[1] The controversies have persisted and the adoption field continues to occupy a position in the forefront of public attention. Hardly a month passes without some public airing about adoption in the mass media, whether newspaper, radio, television, or a popular journal. The voices have been both positive and negative, but all too often the latter have been more vocal, so that a considerable segment of the community shares an image of adoption agencies that tends toward the negative. A large portion of critical commentary has probably originated from applicants who have been turned away from agency doors following brief entrance. The study, assessment, and selection process can therefore be viewed in the realm of public relations, particularly with regard to the more negative notions that have grown up about agency procedures and policies. Ideas about sizeable rejection rates, the length of the study process, rigid requirements imposed on potential applicants, to mention a few, are prominent.

Probably because of the pressures of a job to be done, adoption agencies have spent all too little time and energy counteracting some of these notions. They have also been handicapped because they have not had solid research data upon which to base their public relations efforts. One of our concerns in this study, therefore, is to examine some of these issues so as to encourage agency change if critical allegations are true, or to expose such ideas as myths if they are not.

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[1] Reid, J. H., "Principles, Values and Assumptions Underlying Adoption Practice," Social Work, Vol. 2, No. 1, 1957, p. 22.

The Purpose of the Study

The central aim of this research is to identify the implicit criteria used by adoption workers in their evaluation of adoptive applicants. The primary focus of the study is therefore on specifying the perceptual dimensions underlying caseworker assessments with respect to the suitability of candidates for adoptive parenthood. We are also interested in determining whether caseworker perceptions in this assessment process are of a discrete variety or of a global nature. In other words, our major intent is to examine the way in which adoption workers perceive adoptive applicants.

A related purpose of the study is to discover whether caseworkers have various applicant models for different groups of children. Of particular interest is whether assessments of applicants who are considered suitable for hard-to-place children differ in any material way from the ratings of those couples who are thought to be suitable for the average youngster.

A further question that we plan to explore is whether agencies differ in their assessment tendencies with respect to the underlying perceptual dimensions of applicant evaluation.

We also intend to portray some of the characteristics of our sample of applicants, adoption workers, and the children placed with accepted couples. We will focus on agency selection procedures by relating some of the qualities of applicants to agency acceptance and rejection rates. In other words, we are interested in exploring applicant attributes or attitudes that differentiate between accepted and rejected couples in our sample. In like manner we will attempt to highlight aspects of individual and family functioning that are perceived as positive or negative in caseworkers' assessments of couples as prospects for adoptive parenthood.

These, then, are the major areas that will be covered in the chapters that follow. We are hopeful that the data to be presented will be a starting point in filling some of the gaps in our knowledge about decision making in the complex and important area of adoptive applicant selection.

CHAPTER II

RESEARCH METHODS AND DESIGN

The child adoption field can be thought of as a laboratory. Not a scientific laboratory of controlled experiments, but a laboratory of human and clinical experiences, the richness of which have eluded all attempts at simulation. There is little in the way of fact that has emanated from this laboratory, but a wealth of empirical data have. The present study is the result of one hopeful investigator's attempt to tap this source of data.

From its inception, the intent of the present study has been to address itself to and serve the practitioner in the adoption field. This aim became a major factor not only in determining the nature of the study but also in influencing the overall research plan and the specific methods of study, the various research procedures.

Nature of the Study

When attempting to apply a classification of research designs to the study here reported one is hard pressed in choosing between the Exploratory and Descriptive labels as outlined by Selltiz, et al., for this study encompasses aspects of each. The purpose of the study was not to test or demonstrate hypotheses, but rather to obtain an accurate description (within the limitations of the sample) of one

phase of child welfare practice, the selection of adoptive applicants. More specifically, the aim was to obtain a picture of the structure of social workers' perceptions of adoptive applicants and to spell out the criteria that related to the workers' judgments about applicants' prospects for adoptive parenthood and the outcome of adoption applications. The study also focused on a number of subsidiary questions. For instance, (1) what is the average length of time between initial interview and child placement? (2) What are some of the characteristics of the sample of children placed with the accepted couples in the study? (3) Do the agencies in the study differ with respect to acceptance and rejection rates? (4) Are certain applicant dimensions related to being considered suitable for adoption of a so-called hard-to-place child? These have been but a few of the questions emerging from the adoption field for which the investigator hoped, in undertaking this project, to find some tentative answers.

In addition to shaping the questions for investigation, the investigator's practice orientation had an important bearing on the decisions about the nature of data to be collected. Although there are many approaches to the study of clinical practice, this investigator's bias was in the direction of tapping the richness of the natural setting rather than a simulated approach, which we felt would not fully correspond to the true practice situation. Therefore we decided not to use "canned" cases or vignettes, not to use case readers and records, but rather to study on-going practice through the use of information gained from personal contacts between caseworkers and applicants at

adoption agencies. The major data therefore were obtained by focusing on couples currently applying for adoption, and asking adoption workers to fill out an extensive rating instrument on each couple they had interviewed.

The Sample

In theory the sample for this study might have been drawn randomly from a variety of communities, their adoption agencies, and their applicants. For reasons of practicality this was not feasible, and a number of limitations were incorporated as part of the design.

a. The social agencies

For reasons of expediency and economy the agencies that were asked to participate in this research are all located in the confines and immediate surroundings of a large eastern metropolitan area. In order that the sample represent the practices of a variety of adoption services eight agencies were asked to participate. These cut across public and private auspices, and included the three major religious groupings in addition to the non-sectarian. Agencies with a sizeable intake were an advantage because of the time limitations of the research, yet it was also desirable to have some representation from smaller, more close knit units of service. Membership in the Child Welfare League of America was preferable as some indication of meeting certain standards of service, yet was not imposed as a limitation. Although eight agencies were asked to participate in order to have a cushion against the expectation that some agencies would not be able to commit themselves to this research operation, all eight agencies agreed to join in. The sample, therefore, consisted of three Departments of Public Welfare and five private agencies, a combination of adoption departments that serve the bulk of adoptive applicants in this metropolitan area.

b. The social workers

The workers who participated in the research comprised all those who were responsible for interviewing potential applicant couples coming to the eight adoption services during the sample building phase of the study. This varied as follows:

Table 2-1

Number of Workers In Each Agency
Participating in the Research Project

	Agency								
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	Total
Number of Workers	6	6	7	12	13	25	7	11	87

Students were included, as were full-time and part-time staff members. Among the casework participants there were variations in the sizes of their caseloads, differences in the positions they held within their agencies, and in the amount of training and kind of social work experience they had had. Although the inclusion of such diversity might give pause to the researcher who is accustomed to a more rigorous procedure, the approach here seemed not only reasonable but necessary in view of our attempt to remain as close as possible to the practice scene.

c. The adoptive applicants

Each of the eight agencies in the study began participating in the research on a set date. The timing was determined in part by agency and intake size, with those having smaller units of service designated first to get started in data collection. Administrative matters (such as agency board approval of the research), meeting time arrangements, staff absences and turnover also affected the research beginnings, as our aim was to start at a time when a full complement of staff was available to participate. Data collection began in all eight agencies between June and September 1963. All potential applicant couples who were seen for at least one interview following the starting date in a given agency became part of the study sample. The group, therefore, included both initial applications and reapplications. The research plan called for a gradual accumulation of the sample until a total of 50 cases had built up in each of the eight agencies. Our aim was to obtain a total sample of 400 applicant couples who had been interviewed one or more times. The main principle operating in the accumulation of the sample was that all couples interviewed at least once were to be included, none to be skipped (at least not without consultation with the investigator), until each agency's sample had reached the designated size.

The main reason for using such a sampling approach was to gain a picture of adoption practice over a period of time within the context of the normal operations of each agency. Although the very presence of the research project may have altered the atmosphere in these agencies, and the amount of time spent by workers in completing questionnaires inevitably changed agency operations to some extent, the interest of the investigator was in "business as usual."

Cognizant of possible pitfalls in such sampling, each agency was asked to note any unusual circumstances or events that might have had some biasing effect on worker judgments and applicants. In addition, the investigator remained in continuous contact with the workers and agencies in the sample. There was at least one publicity campaign for adoptive applicants in this metropolitan area during the course of the study, but it is unlikely that this had an unusual biasing effect on any given agency sample of applicants since such publicity is a continuing present day effort to increase the rate of applications to adoption agencies (particularly in relation to the hard-to-place child) and therefore is likely to have had an effect, if any, across all agencies. Possibly agencies were contacted by an unusual array of applicants in response to such publicity. None of the agencies, however, mentioned this as a source of bias.

Also of note was that the study included a period of time in one of the agencies during which the staff was on strike. This affected the research in that data gathering in that agency halted for the duration of the strike. It is also possible that the work stoppage had its effect on worker assessments of couples in so far as the general morale of the agency may have been affected. Such a biasing effect, although potentially present, was difficult to assess.

There were other potential sources of bias. Staff losses, job transfers, and new employment inevitably plague a research project which is carried out in an agency over a period of time. Again this may have affected staff morale. It certainly affected our sample building because intake procedures slowed down as caseloads were rearranged.

Probably the major concern about bias in the type of sampling used in this study concerns the representativeness of couples applying in a sequence of 50. It is certainly possible that the sample of applicants that each agency accrued during the study time may have differed from another sample of 50 couples accumulated in the same manner during a different time period. However, since the build up of as large a sample as 50 initial interviews spanned a considerable period of intake time (in the eight agencies, this ranged from two to 14 months, with the median located at seven and one-half months), the likelihood of such bias seems small. For this reason, and because agencies did not report anything unusual about the applicants they were seeing, the assumption in this study has been that the sample of applicants that accumulated in each agency was representative of the applicants who applied for adoption to that agency.

The applicant sample consisted both of initial applications and reapplications (Table 2-2). The latter group were included in order not to tamper with the range of applicants coming to agencies and in

Table 2-2

Proportion of Initial Applicants and Reapplicants in Each Agency's Sample
(Percent of Total)

	Agency								
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	Total
Initial Applicants to this agency	88	91	54	100	81	88	84	78	83
Reapplicants to this agency	12	9	46	--	19	12	16	22	17
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
(N)	(48)	(56)	(50)	(45)	(52)	(48)	(50)	(49)	(398)

order not to exclude a group of couples who might be more likely than initial applicants to accept, or be considered suitable for, children who were in some way more difficult to place. The inclusion of this group did entail some deviation from our desired format of "live information" in that some case record information was often used in order to complete the questionnaire material.

Some case record information was also inevitably used in those instances where a given couple was transferred from one worker to another during the course of an adoption study (Table 2-3). Such multiple worker contacts were sometimes due to staff losses and job transfers, but also occurred as a result of some agencies' operating procedures. These cases, however, do not seem to pose much of a departure from information gained through personal contact with an applicant couple, as workers transferring cases were often available for conferences, and since the transfers in our sample in the majority of instances occurred after an initial interview, and the responses on the final questionnaire were based on a series of subsequent contacts with the applicants.

Table 2-3

Number of Workers Who Interviewed Applicant Couple
(Percent of Total)

No. of Workers	Agency 1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	Total
1	100	93	100	98	92	46	84	55	84
2	--	7	--	2	8	44	16	45	15
3	--	--	--	--	--	10	--	--	1
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
(N)	(48)	(56)	(50)	(45)	(52)	(48)	(50)	(49)	(398)

As noted earlier, any couple who had at least one interview was included in the sample. One interview cases inevitably presented a problem of quantity and quality of information in the questionnaire material. They were, however, included in the research plan in order that the sample would have its complement of rejected couples, who would not be as likely to be interviewed over an extended period. Some reapplications would also have dropped out of the sample had single interview cases been excluded.

As can be seen in Table 2-4, 47% of the couples in the study were seen for three or fewer interviews. This group comprises the vast majority of rejected couples, second child applications, and withdrawals. The median number of interviews in our sample is four,

Table 2-4

Number of Times (Interviews) that Applicant Couple was Seen
(Percent of Total)

No. of Interviews	Agency 1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	Total
1	17	36	60	33	13	44	36	22	33
2	8	14	8	11	13	--	8	10	9
3	4	5	--	9	8	6	4	6	5
4	17	14	26	20	12	4	30	18	18
5	50	20	6	22	25	35	14	12	23
6	4	5	--	4	23	8	--	14	8
7	--	5	--	--	6	2	6	14	4
8	--	--	--	--	--	--	2	2	0*
Total	100	99	100	99	100	99	100	98	100
(N)	(48)	(56)	(50)	(45)	(52)	(48)	(50)	(49)	(398)

*Quantity more than 0% but less than .6% (we used the rule of rounding up to the nearest even number).

which is the lower limit for accepted initial applicants but also includes a few reapplications, withdrawals, and some rejectees. As one surveys Table 2-4 one is struck by the variability among these agencies, for it varies from 68% of the couples seen (Agency 3) to 29% of the couples seen (Agency 1) for three or less interviews. In Agency 3 such a high percentage was in great measure accounted for by the number of second (or more) child applications that happened to fall within the confines of our sample. Here again it must be stated that in preference to a "neat" sample, our interest was in netting a sample of couples seen, irrespective of how they arrived, who they were, or how long they remained with each agency.

There were two main exceptions to this approach. 1) we excluded all couples who were not individually interviewed, and 2) among those interviewed it became necessary in order to maintain the aims of the project and for reasons beyond our control, as well as because of the time limitations of the project, to eliminate a small group to be described below.

In the first group there were couples who may have contacted agencies by letter or telephone, or come to a group meeting, but were either screened out or self-selected out prior to an individual interview. Couples were sometimes administratively screened out or deferred by letter or telephone because of their residence outside of an agency's geographical boundaries, due to some question about their marital status, shortness of marriage, age, lack of a medical fertility work-up, or religious considerations. The eight agencies differed somewhat in these requirements and in most instances tended to operate with considerable flexibility. For instance, agencies mentioned that although they have age limits they would not usually turn down a couple on this ground alone, or residence limitations might be overlooked if the couple had other attributes that were much in demand, and so on. Therefore some of these couples were screened out on the telephone whereas others were seen in one or more interviews and therefore included in the applicant sample. So, too, a couple's being screened by telephone in one agency because of a particular requirement did not preclude their turning to another agency, and appearing in our sample via that route.

Similar screen-out items pertained to couples who came to group meetings in those agencies that offered such. Here, however, the couples screened themselves out on the basis of information gained, or because of a lack of interest, motivation, or some other reason for not following through when faced with the stark fact of coming in for an appointment.

In this research we do not know what the characteristics are of this total group of potentially interested couples who either were not given an interview following an inquiry or decided not to follow through after inquiry or a group meeting. The definition of our sample spans only those couples who were in fact individually interviewed at least once.

The second group excluded from the sample comprises two sub-groups of couples who were interviewed but left out because a) they did not fit in with the intent of the research, and b) time limits and factors beyond our control made their exclusion necessary. In the first instance are those couples who applied for the adoption of particular children, sometimes relatives and sometimes not, but primarily from overseas. We felt that here we were no longer dealing with agency decisions about what sort of child to place with whom, which was one of the questions in the study, as that decision was no longer pertinent.

Another group of interviewed couples was eliminated from the sample for a variety of reasons. 1) When we began sample building from all intake interviews in Agency 6 in the third week of July, we did not include in the sample the five or so couples seen for initial interviews by a worker who was leaving the agency within a week or two, as she would not have been available to complete the questionnaires we needed; 2) another agency in the sample sometimes deferred cases for six months following one or more interviews because of inadequate religious practices or on medical grounds. In view of the research time limits, such a six month delay made it necessary to exclude three cases from the sample, two of whom had been deferred on religious grounds, one on a medical basis; 3) one case seen in Agency 8 was eliminated due to death of the husband during the course of the study; 4) in three instances the social worker who had completed the home study resigned from the agency without completing the questionnaire material; 5) the questionnaire material on four couples was lost in the mail when a worker, on vacation in a foreign country, sent them to our office; 6) at the close of our data collection period (December 1964) the home study work-up on seven cases was incomplete; and 7) a few cases were eliminated when a worker stated she could not adequately recall an applicant couple because of a sizeable time lag between the time a couple was last seen and the time a worker began to complete the questionnaire. When we spoke to the agencies about all these eliminated cases, nothing of any unusual nature was noted. It was considered that their exclusion did not bias our sample.

Our total sample finally consisted of 398 applicant couples divided as follows:

Table 2-5

Number of Applicant Couples in the Sample of Each Agency

Agency	Number of Cases
Agency 1	48
Agency 2	56
Agency 3	50
Agency 4	45
Agency 5	52
Agency 6	48
Agency 7	50
Agency 8	49
Total	398

Note should be made of the fact that in two agencies some additional cases were seen beyond the requested sample of 50. We asked for these additional cases in order to increase our sample for a self-rating sub-study[1] carried out in these two agencies. In that sub-study questionnaires were sent to a sample of couples, who completed them anonymously. One of our interests was to obtain corresponding self- and worker-ratings on as many couples as possible in order that we might compare the two. However, we had no control over which of the couples who returned questionnaires would eventually fall within the consecutive agency sample rated by the workers. As it turned out, quite a few of the couples who returned self-ratings were also rated by the workers. However we noticed that we had seven self-rating questionnaires that did not fall into the accumulated agency sample in our main study. We therefore asked for worker-ratings on these couples in order to build up the self-worker rating sample for our sub-study. To this extent we tampered with the consecutive sample accumulation in our main study insofar as these cases were added out of turn beyond the samples we would otherwise have had in Agencies 2 and 5, but we considered the effect of this trivial.

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[1] The self-rating sub-study is not included in the present report, but will appear at some future date.

New staff members posed a problem in almost every agency with respect to consecutive sample accumulation. This was so because the new staff member was often assigned more new applicants than a worker already carrying a large caseload, and therefore was likely to receive the brunt of cases designated part of the research sample. If this had occurred the representativeness of the judgment sample might have been skewed in the direction of new staff.

In order to grapple with this problem we consulted with the agencies affected and worked out a quota of "research cases" for new workers. Happily, it seems to have been unncessary for agencies actually to use such a quota system, because of the timing of staff additions. Therefore this did not become a source of bias for our sample accumulation.

Finally, the main responsibility for the unbiased sequential assignment of cases to the research sample rested with the eight agencies themselves. They had been apprised of the enormous importance of such consecutive assignment. It is assumed that they followed our intent, although there may have been a few slips in case assignment. As far as the investigator could ascertain, such deviations from the sequential order occurred rarely, if at all.

d. Time considerations

The data for this study were collected during the period of June 1963 to December 1964. Because of variations in agency size, rates of application, and administrative considerations, the research was introduced into the eight agencies at different times, ranging from June to September 1963, as follows:

Table 2-6

Date That the Research was Initiated and Length of Time of Sample Accumulation at Each Agency

Agency	Start of First Case	Time for Accumulation of Applicant Sample (First Interviews)
Agency 1	June 1963	4 months
Agency 2	June 1963	8 months
Agency 3	July 1963	5 months
Agency 4	June 1963	14 months
Agency 5	September 1963	9 months
Agency 6	July 1963	2 months
Agency 7	June 1963	8 months
Agency 8	June 1963	7 months

The length of time needed by each agency to accumulate initial interviews with its complement of cases varied, ranging from about two to 14 months, depending on application rates, staff size, caseloads, etc. It took agencies anywhere from 11 months to 17 months from the initial interview of the first case to the completion of the last case in that agency's sample. The 17 month figure is of course artificial since the data collection was stopped in December 1964, and a few cases, incomplete at that time, were not included. It should also be noted that the date a last case was completed did not necessarily correspond with the date of the last interview, rather it was the date that the last questionnaire was completed by a particular worker. Sometimes this resulted in a considerable time lag. Nevertheless, close inspection of our data leads us to conclude that the 11-17 month range for the sample is quite accurate.

The time range for completion of any given applicant study (of an accepted initial application) varied from one and one-half months to 17 months. We do not have accurate figures about the average length of time for completion of such studies because of the time lag between the last study interview and the date a worker completed the questionnaire, as noted above. However, we shall subsequently (Chapter VI) present data about the length of time between initial interview and child placement dates.

e. The caseworkers' perceptions

The main data of this study, based on the questionnaire responses of caseworkers, have been treated as an unbiased and representative sample of perceptions of adoption workers. Moreover, they have been treated as fairly contemporaneous, rather than ex post facto, reactions to the applicants in the sample. Since we had no control over questionnaire completion, some bias may have entered if and when a worker completed questionnaires on a number of couples at one sitting. When such conditions prevailed, the judgments made on a given questionnaire may have had some influence on judgments on the questionnaire that followed. Also, spontaneity may have suffered in those instances where there was a sizeable time lag between an interview and questionnaire completion. As mentioned earlier, a few cases were eliminated from the sample for this reason, and every effort was made during the course of the study to avoid the possibility of such an occurrence.

This research deals not only with a sample of agencies, of adoptive applicants, of adoption workers, but also a sample of their perceptions. Given the universe of perceptions, we have tapped a segment. Social workers themselves are variable as are their perceptions. It was assumed that a variety of cases per worker, variations in time periods covered, and the diversity in kinds of responses required in the completion of each questionnaire worked against any artifactual elements that might have distorted our findings, and hence added to the representativeness of our data.

The Questionnaires

a. Caseworkers' Rating Form for Adoptive Applicants

The development of this instrument, which became the main source for our data on caseworker perceptions, was crucial and therefore evolved through a series of stages. In order to include content used by adoption workers in their evaluation of applicants, the investigator met with a number of professionals in the adoption field to outline those conceptual areas to be incorporated in the research instrument. A preliminary instrument was devised and extensively altered on the basis of further conferences with people working in the field. This questionnaire was pretested over a period of several months in two adoption services in order to revise content, clarify the wording of questions, make changes in the response format of some of the questions, as well as to test out the amount of time required for completing the instrument. During this period the eight agencies in the project had agreed to participate and representatives from each were consulted for their suggestions. After further editing, a fairly standardized response format was developed, and many questions were precoded in order to facilitate later work. The final version (see Appendix B) consisted of 102 questions (short answer and open end) covering both descriptive and judgment data, incorporating the many suggestions offered by those in the adoption field.

b. Outcome and Child Placement Form

This form (see Appendix B) was developed in order to obtain a statement about the Outcome of each case in the sample and to get some descriptive material about the children placed with the accepted group of applicants. This limited series of questions covers some aspects of the child's background, placement history and personal attributes.

c. **Caseworker Self-Rating Form**

This brief form (see Appendix B) focused on descriptive data about the workers who participated in the study, in order to obtain some notion about their educational background, years of employment in various areas of social work, in addition to such personal details as age and marital status.

Agency Procedures

The administrative arrangements of introducing the research at each agency were worked out so as to achieve our aim of consecutive sample accumulation. In most instances this necessitated an agency's designating someone responsible for assigning research numbers to couples as workers scheduled interviews with new applicants. Research numbers were used in order to preserve confidentiality. As each family was assigned a research number the worker received a questionnaire (which usually accompanied the case record), with a stamped, addressed envelope attached, to facilitate the flow of questionnaires back to the research department of the Child Welfare League of America as each instrument was completed.

In order to familiarize the adoption staff of every agency with the project, the investigator met with each group to describe the research, review the questionnaire in detail, and the various procedures for completing the instrument, mailing operations, timing, and so forth. The workers were discouraged from discussing questionnaire responses with each other. These "training" sessions were used to answer any questions the staff had about the questionnaire content, and they were encouraged to telephone the investigator if any questions arose during the course of the study. The addition of new staff members during the course of the research required similar orientation.

As each questionnaire was received in the research office, it was reviewed by a research secretary and the investigator and special note made of any missing or ambiguous data. In each instance the investigator contacted the worker who had filled out the questionnaire in order to clarify responses and complete missing items, and often on such occasions the workers provided additional relevant information about a couple. This whole procedure also served as a means of keeping in touch with the workers and the progress of each case in the sample.

The Issue of Reliability

Two variants of consistency are of major concern in this type of research, interworker and intraworker reliability. This becomes an issue because of the necessity of separating true variability from error.

A measure of interworker reliability could have been obtained by a variety of means. For one, it was possible to devise a series of vignettes and ask a sample of workers to rate these on the questionnaire. However such vignettes would at best have been fragmented and therefore contrived (unreal) case examples and also posed the problem of "forcing" reliability by their very nature and wording. The possible use of more complete mock cases presented similar problems, in addition to which one had to ask whether reliability established in this way would have been generalizable to the live adoption interview situation. Another means of obtaining a reliability measure would have been to ask a second worker to sit in on adoption interviews conducted by a colleague, and obtain simultaneous ratings of such interviews. This posed the double problem of making a demand on an already overworked staff and would have imposed a routine that deviated from normal agency operations. Finally we considered developing an extensive scoring manual that could have served as a reference for social workers completing the questionnaires. This also seemed liked an imposition on a staff with little time to spare, and would have only served to give a false sense of security to the investigator if it had not been utilized by each staff member. This is but a partial listing of ways that interworker reliability might have been measured.

The major issue here, however, was whether the aim of this research called for interjudge reliability and therefore made it desirable to obtain such a measure. Unlike some other research situations where interjudge reliability is tested in order to retrain or eliminate the judge who deviates from the group, we here were interested in the judgments that social workers were making in their daily practice situation, with no assumption that any two workers would judge a given couple in the same way. Our assumption was that these adoption workers were proficient in the tasks required by their agencies. The aim of the research called for workers using their own standards (or those of their agency) for making judgments, that is, the standards they used in their daily practice and not any standards we imposed.

A relevant interjudge reliability concern, however, was whether staff members were interpreting the questions on the questionnaire similarly, and understood the words used in our questions. For example, did every worker have a concept of the meaning of "emotionally stable," even though the standards by which each worker judged that variable might differ. We hoped that this problem was substantially avoided by a combination of 1) wording our questions as much as possible in language familiar to adoption staffs (since the questions had originated from suggestions by those in the field), 2) reviewing the questionnaire items with staff groups as the project was initiated in each agency, and 3) encouraging workers to contact the investigator as they had any questions. It should also be noted that any items that were ambiguous in their wording resulted in low correlations with other items, hence low factor loadings, and failure to appear as part of any cluster. Very few items (a total of 20) dropped out in this way.

As for intrajudge reliability, a test-retest method could have been used as a measure. Here, however, the role played by memory and learning is so decisive, even if elusive, that even if high reliability had been established (except in instances where the time interval between successive judgments is much greater than could have been in this study) its meaning would have been questionable. Our approach to this issue was again related to our overall aim: that we were tapping the judgments as they operated in the practice situation at a given time, and there too it was not beyond the realm of possibility that a worker's judgments about a given applicant couple may have been different if sampled at another time.

Systematic Errors

One problem that enters into research based on the use of a paper and pencil approach to data gathering is that of response bias. Did some of our respondents exhibit a tendency toward the right side of the response scale? Did some show a preference for low rather than high numbers? Such biases could have been controlled by randomly alternating the response format. This possibility was considered and discarded, for the advantages seemed outweighed by the likelihood of greater confusion on the part of the workers using the instrument. Did the order of questions presented systematically influence successive answers? No doubt this may have occurred, but was not considered of major importance as the ordering of our questions was along lines of contextual units (rather than a random scattering of questions throughout the questionnaire) in order to remain fairly close to interviewing practices, where there is probably a similar influence of questions on response.

Were systematic errors introduced because the choice of response represented some workers' greater willingness to admit to holding an extreme opinion? Although we have no check on this for the volume of questions in the body of the questionnaire, we did look at the criterion variable, the "General Impression" of the couple as prospects for adoptive parenthood. When this was grouped by agency we noted some variations in the use of the extreme categories. For instance, we noted the greater use of the "outstanding" category in one of the agencies in the sample. We did not know whether such a result represented a response tendency or was the product of the sample of couples seen. A more likely explanation, however, was that in the consecutive sampling of that agency, we happened to tap a large group (46%) of second child applications. This may have meant that when workers were asked to judge couples who already had a child in the home, they could more readily make an extreme judgment.

Of greater consequence to the problem of systematic error, however, was any given worker's tendency to use or not use a given category of judgments. We therefore looked at each worker's use of the "General Impression" choices and noted a fairly random pattern across response categories.

As mentioned earlier, this was no answer about possible response biases in the rest of the questionnaire material, for which we had no check. We assumed that whatever tendencies exhibited themselves in our data were representative of the practice situation.

Coding and IBM Punching

Since most of the questionnaire material was pre-coded the coding operation was primarily one of transcription. This was carried out by two college students, one of whom had had considerable prior coding experience on other research projects.

Toward the end of the coding operation we tested for coder agreement. The more experienced coder had coded about two-thirds of the questionnaires, of which a 10% sample was recoded by the second coder. Since the less experienced coder had coded a much smaller part of the sample we checked 20% of that material. All cases of disagreement were recorded. From this list we singled out those instances where the coders exhibited the greatest unreliability. Each of these was tested by means of the coefficient k,[1] a test of the proportion of agreement after chance agreement has been removed from consideration:

$$k = \frac{p_o - p_c}{1 - p_c}$$

where: p_o = the proportion of units in which the judges agreed
p_c = the proportion of units for which agreement is expected by chance

We noted that in each tested instance (where we had penalized ourselves by using only the worst cases) the level of agreement was significant beyond the .001 level. We therefore felt confident enough about our inter-coder agreement not to perform further checks on the coding, on the assumption that whatever errors did exist would not in any material way affect our findings.

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[1] Cohen, Jacob. "A Coefficient of Agreement for Nominal Scales," Educational and Psychological Measurement, Vol. XX, No. 1, 1960, 37-46.

Open-ended questions were coded by the investigator and recoded by two experienced research colleagues. Instances of disagreement were resolved by the conference method.

The data were coded onto code cards and transferred onto IBM cards at the University of Wisconsin Social Behavior Research Center. In order to determine the error in the punching operation four decks of cards were verified by a 100% check. When these decks resulted in 100% accuracy, we stopped the checking operation on the assumption that even though some error was inevitable, such a level of accuracy augured well for the remaining data punching.

Statistical Analysis

A major task we faced in developing a plan of analysis concerned the problem of the large number of ratings we had on each applicant couple. Therefore in order to focus on the criteria used by caseworkers in their assessment of adoptive applicants, the data seemed to lend themselves most efficiently to a factor analytic approach. This is an economical procedure for reducing a large number of variables to a smaller number of underlying dimensions, or factors.

For the less informed reader, the initial step in this procedure involved the intercorrelation among all the variables in each deck, in our case five such matrices. By means of further statistical manipulations, variables that were interrelated in some underlying conceptual way were grouped together. Such groups of variables were summarized according to what they seemed to share in common. The resulting factors were therefore abstractions, based on the way certain variables interrelated with each other.

The investigator sought technical consultation in order to plan the total analysis as well as the specific statistical manipulations. For the more informed reader, the procedure we utilized is presented below.[1]

This procedure resulted in 43 clusters of items.[2] An item was retained in a factor if it showed a loading of ±.30 or above. If an item had such a loading on several factors it was kept in that cluster where it showed maximum loading (although for interpretive purposes its loadings on the other factors were considered). In instances where a variable did not show up with a high enough loading on any factor (out of a total of 290 there were 20 such items) we assumed that this was due to its instability or the lack of clear interpretation of that item by the social workers. In some instances such items had no variance (i.e., the rates showed little spread in their responses), and therefore did not correlate. We also considered the possibility that a given variable might not have appeared with high enough loadings because we were at this juncture subjecting five decks to separate factor analyses, and our deck splits were somewhat arbitrary even if the sequence of columns followed the content flow of the questionnaire. However, the large number of items per deck made it doubtful that a given variable would not have related to some other item and therefore the assumption above gained credence.[1]

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[1] All machine work was completed at the University of Wisconsin using a CDC 1604 computer and a BIMD 17 program. The factoring procedure was carried out on all five correlation matrices with a principal axis extraction method utilizing squared multiple correlation coefficients in the main diagonal. This latter is Guttman's lower bound estimate of communality and is therefore a conservative estimate of the proportion of variance of each variable accounted for by the factors. All real eigenroots equal to or greater than unity were extracted. Rotation was machine programmed, using Kaiser's normal Varimax criterion.

[2] The 43 first-order clusters are not included here for reasons of brevity, and because they are in part a function of our deck splits. However they may be obtained from the author on request.

It should also be noted that we set no lower limit on the number of items per factor. Because of the arbitrary nature of the deck splits we realized that it was possible for one variable to form a separate cluster, although this same variable might have clustered together with other items that were included in another deck. In view of our plan to refactor the first series of clusters we guarded against any variable's disappearing from the analysis by retaining any cluster, even if composed of a unique variable.

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[1] There was one exception. The husband's SES index rating did not appear with a high enough loading in the second-order analysis. We believed this may have been due to the content of other variables included in that deck and therefore included it as a separate variable in a later correlation matrix in order to determine its relationship to the "second-order" factors, but again its correlation turned out to be too low.

The frequency distribution of every variable in each of the 43 clusters was inspected (as were means and standard deviations when needed) in order to eliminate 1) highly skewed variables, 2) those variables where the missing information category was sizeable, and 3) those variables where the size and location of the "No Answer" category may have spuriously increased intercorrelations. Six variables were eliminated on such grounds. We also selected a number of variables that could have been expected to have a curvilinear relationship with our criterion variable, the caseworker's general impression of an applicant couple. Inspection of cross-tabulations of these variables with the criterion showed no evidence of curvilinearity.

Next we developed a score for every couple on each of the 43 clusters. After 1) inspecting the standard deviations of every variable within any given cluster (an item with a larger standard deviation contributes more weight to a cluster) and noting no sizeable deviance, and 2) cognizant that the response format of the majority of items was the same, we decided on an undifferentiated weighting system using +1 or -1, depending on the sign a given variable had in a particular cluster. In this way each applicant couple in the sample was scored on each of the 43 clusters, and the intercorrelation matrix of these scores was in turn subjected to the same factor analytic procedure as described above. By this means our data were finally reduced to factors representing the underlying scheme of clusters of variables (Chapter V), the conceptual dimensions used by caseworkers in their judgments of adoptive applicants.

In order to scrutinize the relationship between the criterion variable (the caseworker's general impression of an applicant couple), the final factor scores, and each of the clusters that had been used in the "second-order" factor analysis,[1] we intercorrelated all of these in a 41 x 41 intercorrelation matrix (see Appendix A). In order to score the couples on the "second-order" factors we again considered weighting the clusters within each factor differentially, since clusters containing more items should have carried more weight in the analysis. When we scrutinized the standard deviation of each cluster within each "second-order" factor we noted a high correlation between it and the number of items per cluster (i.e., the more items per cluster the larger the standard deviation). Therefore we decided to unit weight the clusters rather than utilizing a more complex set of weights, on the premise that the correlation between a unit weighting system and another means of weighting would, in this instance, be so high as not to warrant the time consuming complexities of a differential weighting approach.

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[1] Two clusters were eliminated: one because of an error in the code of a variable with the highest loading in a cluster, and the second because the loadings appeared artifactual, due to the wording of the questions.

As part of our interest in the predictive aspects of the "second-order" factors we also completed a multiple regression analysis using the criterion variable as the dependent variable (Chapter V). And finally, in order to differentiate among all the agencies in their conceptual utilization of the second-order" factors we subjected the data to a multiple discriminant analysis, using the eight agencies as the grouping variable (Chapter V).

Now, a few final words about what is to follow. A study such as this entails or encourages many dangers, the main one being the tendency to generalize beyond one's data. It is rarely possible to enumerate a total population from which to draw a sample, and the passage of time accents the notion that a sample drawn today may differ in various ways from a sample drawn at the time the writing is done. Despite these cautionary remarks we believe that the weight of this study rests on the fact that it is fairly rare in child welfare research to have data based on the experience of eight agencies in a community. Because of this, the size of our sample, and the care with which it was selected we feel secure about making some generalizations about adoption practices in this eastern metropolitan center, and hope that the implications of the findings will be a useful adjunct for the practitioner in the field of adoption.

Summary

In this chapter we have outlined the nature of this study, its aim and overall design. We have described how the samples of adoption services, social workers and adoptive applicants were chosen, and dealt with the limitations of our approach. We have discussed our method of data collection and described the instruments used for that purpose. We also focused on such issues as reliability, systematic errors, and the question of potential biases that may have affected our findings. We described our coding and IBM punching operation, and set forth our procedures for statistical analysis.

CHAPTER III

THE ADOPTIVE APPLICANTS

As noted in Chapter II, the present research is based on the judgments by social workers of 398 adoptive applicant couples. This chapter deals with a description of these couples. We were interested in such questions as 1) how the couples were referred, 2) how old they were, 3) how many children they had, 4) what their family constellation was, and so forth. Many of these questions were factual and the caseworkers acted as reporters of identifying information. Here we assumed the accuracy of information obtained. On the other hand, much of our data was based on the caseworkers' judgments. We therefore were aware that there may have been instances where workers' assessments differed more or less from factual accuracy, or for that matter, from the way the couples might have described themselves.

a. Initial Application vs. Reapplications

The total sample of applicant couples consisted of 83 percent initial applications and 17 percent reapplications, divided among the eight agencies as shown in Table 2-2 (Chapter II). There was considerable variation among the agencies, ranging from a near 1:1 ratio (Agency 3) to one agency (Agency 4) where 100 percent of the sample was composed of initial applicants. At the midpoint of this range among the eight agencies the ratio was five to seven initial applications per each reapplicant couple at the middle of the range.

An initial application was defined as a first contact with a given agency, which did not preclude prior contacts with other adoption facilities. Similarly, a reapplication was defined as a return to the same agency with which a couple had had a prior contact. It was of interest to examine the quantity and nature of other adoption contacts experienced by these couples (Tables 3-1 and 3-2).

Table 3-1

Prior Adoption Contacts with Other Adoption Facilities of the Initial Applicants in the Eight Agencies

Type of Contact	Percent of Total
No prior contact	69
Previously adopted from another agency	5
Previously adopted from private sources	3
Previously rejected by another agency	6
Previously withdrew from another agency	5
Previously withdrew from exploring private sources	1
Current or prior contact with other adoption facility, but no follow-through	11
Total	100
(N)	(329)

Table 3-2

Prior Adoption Contacts of the Reapplicants in the Eight Agencies

Type of Contact	Percent of Total
Previously adopted from this agency	77
Previously rejected by this agency	3
Previously withdrew from this agency	12
Previous contact with this agency but also prior contact with other adoption facility	9
Total	101
(N)	(69)

We noted that among initial applicants prior contacts with other adoption facilities were relatively few. It is of course possible that there was some reporting error here in that some couples, in an effort to present themselves most favorably, may not have been candid in their discussions of other adoption contacts. Granting this possibility, it was nevertheless of interest that given the rather sizeable group of people who do turn to private resources, so few in our sample reported such prior contacts. It also led us to speculate whether agency and private applicants possibly come from fairly different populations, or tend to travel rather diverse routes in their quest for a child, without much cross-over between the two groups.

Since professional time is always scarce in the adoption field, we wondered how many interviews the agencies devoted to the two groups of applicants (Table 3-3).

Table 3-3

The Relationship of Number of Interviews to Initial Applications and Reapplications

Number of Interviews		Initial Applications Percent of Total	Reapplications Percent of Total
1		30	45
2		7	19
3		4	9
4		18	14
5		25	12
6+		15	1
	Total	99	100
	(N)	(329)	(69)

Considering the much larger group of initial applications in addition to the number of interviews per couple, it was apparent that the large majority of agency interview time was devoted to couples who were initial applicants to a given agency.

We were also interested in the workers' evaluative judgments of these two groups of applicants (Table 3-4). Of note here was the sizeable percent of "Outstanding" judgments rendered in the reapplicant group. Since this group was undoubtedly composed of couples who had adopted previously, it underscored the notion that workers a) could more easily judge the quality of a couple and/or b) were more willing to make an early firm judgment when they had information based on a parent-child trio (at least) rather than on a childless husband-wife duo.

Table 3-4

Initial Applications vs. Reapplications:

Worker Impression of Couple

Worker Impression	Initial Applications Percent of Total	Reapplications Percent of Total
Outstanding prospects for adoptive parenthood	11	42
Good prospects for adoptive parenthood	42	36
Fairly good prospects for adoptive parenthood	16	12
Dubious about couple as prospects for adoptive parenthood	14	4
Poor prospects for adoptive parenthood	16	6
Total	99	100
(N)	(329)	(69)

b. Principal Source of Referral

Table 3-5

Principal Source of Referral

Referral Source	Percent of Total
Family member	5
Friend	28
Physician	11
Minister, priest, rabbi	9
Social agency	17
Newspaper, radio, tv, ads.	14
Other (self, psychologist, etc.)	14
Don't know	2
Total	100
(N)	(398)

The "friend" category in Table 3-5 was the largest single response category. Speculation led us to wonder whether the more informal acquaintance system was particularly influential as a referral agent. The combination of the more formal medical and religious categories drew fewer numbers. This was surprising in view of the direct contact of almost all these couples with the medical profession in exploring their fertility status. Possibly this had implications for the relationship of adoption agencies to medicine and religious institutions. An equally valid interpretation, however, was that we were tapping referrals to a specific agency, a secondary step in the decision to apply, whereas a physician or religious official may have initially referred couples to adoption facilities in general, leaving open the decision with regard to which particular agency to approach.

c. Applicant Characteristics

Table 3-6

Birthplace of Applicant Couple
(Percent of Total)

	Husband	Wife
New York City and suburbs	56	55
Other U. S.: rural, small towns	16	20
Other U. S.: urban	15	11
Foreign born: rural and small towns	4	5
Foreign born: urban	5	5
Don't know	4	4
Total	100	100
(N)	(398)	(398)

The sample of applicants in our eight agencies stemmed primarily from urban backgrounds (Table 3-6) with 76 percent of the husbands and 71 percent of the wives in that classification.

Table 3-7

Age of Applicant Couple
(Percent of Total)

Age in Years	Husband	Wife
20-24	2	4
25-29	12	25
30-34	34	36
35-39	31	25
40-44	13	8
45-49	6	2
50 +	2	0*
Total	100	100
(N)	(398)	(398)

*Quantity more than 0% but less than .6% (we used the rule of rounding up to the nearest even number).

The median and modal age categories in Table 3-7 are 35-39 years for husband applicants and 30-34 years for wives, with the median age for husbands at 35.2, for wives at 32.3. In the United States at large in 1963 the median age of a mother giving birth to her first child was 21.4; and for the second child, 23.7 years.[1] (Figures for the father were unavailable.) These figures must be looked at with caution since our sample largely dealt with an urban married group, whereas the U.S. statistic includes many strata in society that would tend to depress the median figure. Nevertheless, it seemed to us of interest to note such an age differential between the adoptive group and the population at large, even if the gap would undoubtedly have been much narrower given a more comparable group. We were also cognizant of the fact that an age differential could be expected since the adoptive group needed considerable time to clarify and reconcile their infertility status.

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[1] U.S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare, "Vital Statistics of the United States, 1963," U.S. Government Printing Office, Vol. 1, Natality, p. 13 (figures exclude data for residents of New Jersey).

Separate analyses of variance were performed on the age variables with reference to husbands and wives, using the eight agencies as the grouping variable. These yielded no significant results. In other words, when we separately compared the age means among husbands and among wives across the eight agencies they were enough alike so that we could not consider them as stemming from different populations.

When we looked at the relationship of age and agency decisions we found the following:

Table 3-8

The Relationship of Husband's Age and the Agency Decision
(Percent of Total)

Agency Decision	Husband's Age 20-24	25-29	30-34	35-39	40-44	45-49	50+
Couple was accepted	17	47	58	61	53	33	40
Couple withdrew, were judged good prospects	33	12	16	12	6	12	--
Couple withdrew, were judged poor prospects	--	6	4	6	12	8	10
Couple was rejected	50	35	21	20	29	46	50
Total	100	100	99	99	100	99	100
(N)	(6)	(49)	(135)	(123)	(51)	(24)	(10)

Table 3-9

The Relationship of Wife's Age and the Agency Decision
(Percent of Total)

Agency Decision	Wife's Age 20-24	25-29	30-34	35-39	40-44	45-49	50+
Couple was accepted	40	57	57	52	52	56	--
Couple withdrew, were judged good prospects	15	17	18	5	3	--	--
Couple withdrew, were judged poor prospects	--	3	4	14	3	--	50
Couple was rejected	45	22	20	29	42	44	50
Total	100	99	99	100	100	100	100
(N)	(20)	(94)	(141)	(101)	(31)	(9)	(2)

As mentioned earlier, our major dependent variables were the caseworkers' general impression of couples as prospects for adoptive parenthood and the outcomes of the couples' applications at the eight agencies. We now turn to the relationship of these variables to the age variable. Among husbands in each of the two age categories ranging from 30-39 years over 70 percent of our sample was "Accepted" or judged "Good Prospects" for adoptive parenthood, while at either extreme of the age range the proportion falling in these two decision categories dropped considerably. Among the wives in our sample the two largest "Accepted" or "Good Prospects" totals, again over 70 percent, fell in the 25-29 and 30-34 year old subgroups, with percentages dropping off in either direction. In each instance it seemed likely that the higher age categories among the "Accepted" applicants were enlarged by the inclusion of reapplicants in the sample, since this group was more likely to be both older and "Accepted."

Table 3-10

Race of Couple

(Percent of Total)

White	88
Negro	11
Oriental	1
Mixed: White-Negro	0*
Mixed: White-Other	0*
Total	100
(N)	(398)

*Quantity more than 0% but less than .6% (we used the rule of rounding up to the nearest even number).

The racial composition of our sample was predominantly a white one, with 88 percent of the sample falling in that category.

This is slightly higher than the percent that would have accrued had we not stopped including interracial applicants in agency 5 midway through the sample accumulation process (see Chapter II, p. 30 for an explanation). Needless to say, it is unlikely that such a deviation from routine in one of the eight agencies had any sizeable effect on our distribution.

We looked at how white and Negro couples were judged as prospects for adoptive parenthood. Fifty-nine percent of the white and 45 percent of the Negro couples were judged "Outstanding" or "Good Prospects," 14 percent of the white and 26 percent of the Negro group were placed in the middle "Fairly Good" category, while 27 percent of the white and 29 percent of the Negro couples were considered "Doubtful" or "Poor Prospects." On the whole this seemed like a fairly even distribution (and an F test performed on race versus the worker's impression of the couple as prospects for adoptive parenthood yielded no significant result), the main differences being that Negro candidates were less likely to be rated "Outstanding" and more likely than the white group to be judged "Fairly Good." This may have been due to the perceived differential in the quality of the applicants. As noted earlier, however, reapplicants were more often rated "Oustanding than were initial applicants, and the agency that contributed the majority of Negro applicants had no reapplications in its sample. This seemed an equally likely explanatio for the percentage differences we observed.

Table 3-11

Relationship of Applicants' Race to Agency Outcome
(Percent of Total)

Outcome	Race: White	Negro	Oriental	Mixed: White-Negro	Mixed: White-Other
Couple was accepted	55	49	33	50	100
Couple withdrew, were judged good prospects	11	24	33	--	--
Couple withdrew, were judged poor prospects	6	5	33	50	--
Couple was rejected	27	22	--	--	--
Total	99	100	99	100	100
(N)	(350)	(41)	(3)	(2)	(2)

We were quite surprised at the data in Table 3-11. We had expected that the proportion of Negro couples accepted by agencies, in view of the large demand for such couples and the dearth of such applicants, would be larger than among the white group. Instead, the accepted group was slightly smaller. However, the "Withdrawn-Good Prospects" group among Negro applicants outweighed the white group. This was similar to the findings of a study carried out in Pittsburgh by David Fanshel,[1] where the withdrawal rate among Negroes was three times as high as among whites, and the large majority of such drop-outs were considered promising candidates, as was true in our study. Fanshel inferred from this that the differential in socio-economic status between Negro applicants and professional workers may have created some subtle hazards in the application process. It is possible that our findings pointed in a similar direction.

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[1] Fanshel, David, A Study in Negro Adoption, New York: Child Welfare League of America, Inc., 1957.

Table 3-12

Religious Denomination of Applicant Couples
(Percent of Total)

Denomination		
Couple same religion:	Catholic	39
Couple same religion:	Jewish	14
Couple same religion:	Protestant	35
Couple same religion:	Greek Orthodox	1
Couple mixed religion		11
	Total	100
	(N)	(398)

The distribution of religious affiliation in our applicant sample was probably in part a function of the agencies that participated in the sample. For example, if we had had more than one sectarian agency of Catholic denomination in the sample, the proportion of Catholic couples would have been larger. Although we were tempted to say that the distribution partly reflected the availability of children for placement, this was more probably an influence on who was accepted than on who applied. This factor, however, may have influenced applications in those instances where agencies discouraged couples from applying to them because of the low availability of certain denominations of children (since under the State's law agencies must place a child in a home of the child's religion, wherever practicable), although in many such instances an agency was apt to refer such a couple to another agency where children of that religious affiliation were more plentiful.

Eleven percent of the applicant couples were of mixed religious affiliations. Of these, eight percent were a Protestant-Catholic combination, with the remaining three percent scattered among four other mixed groupings.

We noted that the variation among agencies as to the religious denomination of their applicants had a wide range. At one end of the continuum was an agency with all applicants from one religious grouping, while at the other end one agency's applications had all denominations represented. The majority of applicants in three agencies were Catholic, in another three, Protestant, while Jewish applicants were in the majority in only one agency. We felt that these data were affected by the combination of differential early (prior to interview) screening, selective referrals, general knowledge in the community about agency needs and interests, as well as applicants' choice of agency.

As can be seen in Table 3-13, there was little variation in the proportion of couples in the three major religious groups who were "Accepted" and considered "Good Prospects" (and an F test performed on religion versus the worker's impression of the couple as prospects for adoptive parenthood yielded no significant result). This was a

Table 3-13

Relationship Between Religious Denomination of Applicants and Agency Outcome

(Percent of Total)

Outcome	Religious Denomination Both Catholic	Both Jewish	Both Protestant	Both Greek Orthodox	Couple Mixed
Couple was accepted	58	49	56	25	48
Couple withdrew, were judged good prospects	12	14	14	--	9
Couple withdrew, were judged poor prospects	4	2	11	--	4
Couple was rejected	25	34	19	75	39
Total	99	99	100	100	100
(N)	(155)	(55)	(144)	(4)	(44)

surprising finding in view of the prevalent idea that some religious denominations, particularly the Jewish group, were in a disadvantageous position as far as being accepted for adoption. The distribution in our sample did not support this notion. It is of course true that the Jewish group, for instance, had fewer agencies to turn to for adoption because of the relative dearth of available Jewish children, and that this placed them in a less favorable position than couples of other religions. This may mean that more Jewish couples in this metropolitan area turn to independent adoption or to agencies in other states. This possibility, however, did not alter the interpretation of our finding that those Jewish applicants who were seen for at least one interview were as likely to be accepted as were applicants of other denominations. We wondered whether the reason for this might have

been because of a more rigorous pre-interview screening procedure but found no evidence for such an interpretation. We also looked at the reapplication rate among Jewish couples, since reapplicants did have a higher rate of acceptance than initial applicants. We found an even distribution of reapplicants among all agencies with the exception of agency 3, which had 46 percent reapplicants but none Jewish, and therefore did not alter our conclusion that couples of all major religious groups who were seen for one or more interviews had about an equal chance of being accepted for adoption.

We also noted that couples of mixed religious denominations had an acceptance rate close to the major religious groupings. However among the combined "Rejected" and "Poor Prospects" categories the proportion was somewhat higher than in the three major denominations. Of the mixed religious sample (44 couples) 70 percent designated that they would rear an adopted child as Catholic, 20 percent designated Protestant, seven percent indicated Jewish and two percent were in an "Other" category.

The husbands and wives in our sample were primarily descendants from North America, the British Islands, East, Central, Southern Europe, or a mixture of backgrounds. The similarity of husband and wife distributions were of interest, although it was not possible to assume that the husbands and wives of a given nationality comprised married couples (Table 3-14).

Table 3-14

Nationality of Descent of Applicant Couples
(Percent of Total)

	Husband	Wife
North American: U. S. and Canada (Includes white, Negro and Puerto Rican)	18	18
South American, Central America and Mexico	0*	1
British Isles: England, Wales, Scotland, Ireland	17	17
Scandinavia: Norway, Sweden, Denmark, Finland	2	2
East Europe: Poland, Russia, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Yugoslavia, Lithuania, Rumania, Estonia	10	8
Central Europe: France, Germany, Austria, Switzerland, Belgium, Holland	10	9
South Erope: Portugal, Spain, Italy, Greece--Mediterranean	20	17
Asia, Australia, Africa	1	1
Combination of above	16	20
Don't Know	5	6
Other	0*	1
Total	99	99
(N)	(398)	(398)

*Quantity more than 0% but less than .6% (we used the rule of rounding up to the nearest even number).

In Tables 3-15 and 3-16 we looked at the applicants' highest attained educational level, according to agency. In order to make comparisons, we tabulated the median (after excluding the "don't know" category) for each group. The median educational level reached by the husbands in our total sample fell in the "college, not completed" category. In the three Departments of Public Welfare and one private agency, the median was "high school graduate." In three private agencies the median was the same as for the full sample, and in one private agency the median was at the "college graduate" level. For the total sample of wives the median educational level attained was "high school graduate." Six of the agencies, the three Departments of Public Welfare and three private agencies, also had medians in this category, while in two of the private agencies the median was in the "college, not completed" category. On the whole, then, applicants to the Departments of Public Welfare had attained a lower educational level than had applicants to the private agencies.

We also performed analyses of variance on the education variable with respect to husbands and wives, using the eight agencies as the grouping variable. These yielded significant F ratios (for husbands $F_{7/390} = 4.93$, $P < .01$, for wives $F_{7/390} = 4.45$, $P < .01$). In other words, when we separately compared the education means among husbands and among wives across the eight agencies we could

Table 3-15

Husband's Highest Educational Level by Agency

(Percent of Total)

	Agency								
Husband's Education	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	Total
Grade school, not completed	4	--	--	11	2	--	2	--	2
Grade school graduate	4	--	6	4	--	--	--	--	2
High school, not completed	8	9	10	20	4	21	12	18	12
High school graduate	40	36	18	36	27	25	22	31	29
College, not completed	21	9	20	11	12	21	20	6	15
College graduate	17	16	14	4	31	14	22	16	17
Graduate training, no degree	--	2	2	2	--	6	2	10	3
Graduate degree	4	9	28	9	23	12	14	16	14
Don't know	2	20	2	2	2	--	6	2	5
Total	100	101	100	99	101	99	100	99	99
(N)	(48)	(56)	(50)	(45)	(52)	(48)	(50)	(49)	(398)

Table 3-16

Wife's Highest Educational Level by Agency
(Percent of Total)

	Agency								
Wife's Education	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	Total
Grade school, not completed	2	--	--	11	2	--	2	2	2
Grade school graduate	4	--	2	2	--	2	2	2	2
High school, not completed	6	12	10	24	4	8	12	12	11
High school graduate	73	46	34	33	35	48	44	55	46
College, not completed	6	4	10	13	25	15	6	12	11
College graduate	6	9	30	9	25	15	10	12	15
Graduate training, no degree	--	2	8	2	2	2	8	2	3
Graduate degree	2	7	4	2	6	10	8	--	5
Don't know	--	20	2	2	2	--	8	2	5
Total	99	100	100	98	101	100	100	99	100
(N)	(48)	(56)	(50)	(45)	(52)	(48)	(50)	(49)	(398)

Table 3-17

The Relationship of Husband's Education to Agency Outcome
(Percent of Total)

Outcome	Grade School, Not Completed	Grade School Graduate	High School, Not Completed	High School Graduate	College, Not Completed	College Graduate	Graduate Training, No Degree	Graduate Degree	Don't Know	Total
Couple was accepted	22	43	54	60	49	54	75	69	--	54
Couple withdrew, were judged good prospects	11	--	10	14	19	18	--	10	--	13
Couple withdrew, were judged poor prospects	22	--	4	2	7	4	17	9	21	6
Couple was rejected	44	57	32	23	25	24	8	12	79	26
Total	99	100	100	99	100	100	100	100	100	99
(N)	(9)	(7)	(50)	(116)	(59)	(68)	(12)	(58)	(19)	(398)

reject the hypothesis that the education means stemmed from the same populations. However we felt that it was important to distinguish between statistical significance and the size of the effect. In order to determine the latter we calculated ϵ^2 (epsilon)[1] for the variables above. ϵ^2 resulted in a value of .06 in each case. In other words, only six percent of the variability among husbands' and wives' education scores was associated with their presence in a given agency's sample, and such a small effect was not considered a material difference among the agencies.

With respect to agency outcome and husband's education, the picture may have reflected the public-private differential noted above, for within the accepted group there were two education peaks, at the "high school graduate level" and at both graduate training levels. The latter included (within any given education category) the largest proportion of couples accepted by agencies. In other words, we may have been dealing here with an interaction effect. That is, the large proportion of public agency applicants who were at the "high school graduate" level may have influenced the location of one education peak while the larger proportion of private agency applicants at higher education levels influenced the location of the other (higher) education peak among accepted couples.

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[1] Cohen, J., "Some Statistical Issues in Psychological Research," in B. Wolman (Ed.), Handbook of Clinical Psychology, New York: McGraw-Hill, 1965, pp. 95-121.

In what follows there will be a number of instances in which we will be looking at the relationship of group membership and some score variable. In a number of these instances we will be using ϵ^2 (epsilon) as an index of how much of the variability in the score is related to group membership. This will be expressed in percentage terms. We will consider any percentage of less than 10 percent as not material.

In order to obtain a general measure of socioeconomic status we utilized a scale evolved from the 1947 North-Hatt National Opinion Research Council study of occupational prestige,[1] which was replicated in 1963.[2] The 1963 replication resulted in a .99 correlation with the earlier scale and therefore attested to the remarkable stability of occupational prestige ratings. This gave us confidence in our use of the 1947 scale. The continuum was developed by asking a national sample of the American adult population to judge a large group of occupations as to prestige standing, from which a prestige hierarchy of occupations was developed. The ratings depended in part on the subjective ratings of individuals and therefore did not necessarily correlate very highly with income and education. The final scale, after weights had been applied to the prestige ratings, ranged from 0-96. In our study this scale was arbitrarily divided into seven classes in order to conform to data processing requirements.

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[1] Reiss, A. J., Occupations and Social Status, London: The Free Press of Glencoe, Inc., 1961.

[2] Hodge, R. W., Siegel, P. M., and Rossi, P. H., "Occupational Prestige in the United States, 1925-1963," The American Journal of Sociology, Vol. LXX, November 1964, pp. 286-302.

Table 3-18

Coding of Occupational Prestige Status of Applicants on the Reiss Socioeconomic Index
(Percent of Total)

SES Index	Husband	Wife
84 - 96	12	2
70 - 83	21	6
56 - 69	18	10
42 - 55	18	13
28 - 41	12	2
14 - 27	12	4
0 - 13	6	2
Unemployed and don't know	1	1
Housewife	--	61
Total	100	101
(N)	(398)	(398)

We noted in Table 3-18 that the distribution among the husbands' occupation prestige categories was somewhat skewed toward the upper end of the scale. On the whole the United States Census classification of "Professional, technical and kindred workers" occupied the upper ranks, with "Laborers" at the bottom of the scale. The Reiss prestige ratings, however, resulted in a relative absence of score homogeneity[1] within the major Census occupation groupings and considerable overlap between these groups. It was therefore impossible to designate a particular census classification as corresponding with a given occupational prestige category. The median of our total sample of husbands on the prestige continuum fell at the 57 level, the median of the "Accepted" group was at 60, and the "Rejected" group at 51.

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[1] By lack of score homogeneity we meant that within any U.S. Census classification, such as "Professional, technical and kindred workers" the prestige scores covered a considerable range of scores rather than a narrow portion of the scale. Social workers, for instance, had a prestige ranking of 64 whereas physicians received a score of 92, although both occupations were in the "Professional, ..." census category.

Table 3-19

The Relationship of Husband's Reiss Socioeconomic Index and Agency Outcome
(Percent of Total)

	Husband's SES Index							
Agency Outcome	84-96	70-83	56-69	42-55	41-28	14-27	0-13	Don't Know and Unemployed
Couple was accepted	61	55	62	45	53	60	39	25
Couple withdrew, were good prospects	18	13	11	12	15	6	17	--
Couple withdrew, were poor prospects	2	10	6	4	4	6	13	25
Couple was rejected	18	22	21	38	28	27	30	50
Total	99	100	100	99	100	99	99	100
(N)	(49)	(83)	(71)	(73)	(47)	(48)	(23)	(4)

We noted here that although the proportion of accepted couples within the various occupational prestige categories was fairly even, with the exception of the lowest category, the largest percent of the combined "Accepted" and "Withdrawn Good" category was in the top (84-96) occupational prestige group, with many other categories not far removed. We were therefore inclined to say that there was no particular trend with respect to agency outcome and husbands' occupational prestige, except in the lowest and middle categories, where the "Rejected" and "Withdrawn Poor" rates were the highest.

An analysis of variance performed on the worker's impression of the couple as prospects for adoptive parenthood versus the husband's Reiss SES Index as the grouping variable resulted in an $F_{7/390} = 3.75$, which was significant ($P < .01$). However, when we calculated ϵ^2 we noted that only five percent of the variability of impression scores was associated with the husband's Reiss SES category, hence the magnitude of the effect was considered trivial.

We also looked at the relationship of the husband's Reiss scores among the eight agencies, using the latter as the grouping variable. The F test was significant ($F_{7/390} = 5.94$, $P < .01$) but again the size of the effect was not considered material, since only eight percent of the variability of the husband's Reiss scores was associated with their having been applicants at the agencies in the sample.

The median total gross yearly income (husband and wife incomes combined, Table 3-20) for the applicants in our sample was $11,025. A more useful figure for our purpose, however, was the husband's gross income, since most of the employed women planned to stop working in the event that a child was placed in their home. The median income for the husbands was $8,649.

Table 3-20

Gross Income of Applicants
(Percent of Total)

Income	Husband	Wife	Total (Combined)
None	--	59	--
Under $2,500	0*	7	--
2,500 - 4,999	6	16	4
5,000 - 9,999	60	10	38
10,000 - 14,999	19	0*	39
15,000 - 19,999	5	0*	7
20,000 - 24,999	2	--	1
Over 25,000	2	--	2
Don't know	7	7	8
Total	101	99	99
(N)	(398)	(398)	(398)

*Quantity more than 0% but less than .6% (we used the rule of rounding up to the nearest even number).

Table 3-21

Husband's Gross Income: Agency Distribution
(Percent of Total)

Husband's Income	Agency 1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Under $2,500	--	--	--	--	--	--	2	--
2,500 - 4,999	4	5	4	20	6	6	4	4
5,000 - 9,999	73	48	54	73	54	71	52	55
10,000 - 14,999	17	16	20	4	27	17	20	31
15,000 - 19,999	--	4	16	2	8	--	2	6
20,000 - 24,999	2	2	--	--	4	2	2	--
Over 25,000	--	--	2	--	2	4	2	2
Don't know	4	25	4	--	--	--	16	2
Total	100	100	100	99	101	100	100	100
(N)	(48)	(56)	(50)	(45)	(52)	(48)	(50)	(49)

The median figure remained in the same income range ($5,000-9,999) across all the agencies (Table 3-21). Among husbands who had incomes of $10,000 and above, the mean percentage of applicants at private agencies was 33 percent, whereas the mean among the public agencies represented 16 percent of their couples.

In a more non-objective realm we asked each caseworker to record her estimate of each couple's socioeconomic situation (Table 3-22).

Table 3-22

Caseworker Ratings of Couple's Socioeconomic Situation

Rating	Percent of Total
"They have less than adequate income; indebtedness has been common; family has a fair amount of worry about not having adequate income."	2
"They have moderately adequate income but are able to afford few luxuries; difference between family income and 'extra' cash reserve is very small."	21
"They have adequate income but have to plan carefully for special needs, e.g., college tuition, purchase of home, special vacations, etc."	45
"They are comfortable; the comforts and necessities of life are taken for granted; have good margin of savings for special needs."	28
"They are well-to-do or better; able to afford considerable number of luxuries, high priced home, trips abroad, etc."	4
Don't Know	1
Total	101
(N)	(398)

Although we had hoped to do so, it was not feasible to look at the correspondence between the caseworkers' ratings and actual income. Even if such an analysis had been possible, its meaning would have been obscure, as "Income" related to the couples' current status whereas the worker ratings of socioeconomic situation related to a judgment of couples' operations over time.

Table 3-23

Applicant's Current Housing

Applicant's Housing	Percent of Total
Own a house	59
Rent a house	3
Own an apartment	3
Rent an apartment	34
Don't know	1
Total	100
(N)	(398)

Table 3-24

Applicant's Place of Residence

Residence	Percent of Total
Large city	37
Medium sized city	7
Small city	9
Large town or village	12
Medium town or village	19
Small town or village	14
Rural area	3
Total	101
(N)	(398)

Although 66 percent of the couples were judged to have adequate or moderately adequate incomes, and hence the necessity of fairly careful planning of budgets, 59 percent had already purchased (at least partially) their own homes at the time they applied for adoption.

Table 3-25

Couple's Duration of Present Marriage

Years of Marriage	Percent of Total
Under 4 years	10
4-8 years	42
8-12 years	25
12-16 years	16
16 + years	7
Don't know	0*
Total	100
(N)	(398)

*Quantity more than 0% but less than .6% (we used the rule of rounding up to the nearest even number).

Table 3-26

Couple's Marital History

History	Percent of Total
First marriage for both	87
First marriage for wife, husband divorced, annulled, widowed	5
First marriage for husband, wife divorced, annulled, widowed	6
Both previously married, both divorced, annulled, widowed	2
Both previously married, one divorced, annulled, widowed	0*
Total	100
(N)	(398)

*Quantity more than 0% but less than .6% (we used the rule of rounding up to the nearest even number).

As might have been anticipated, applicants to our agencies had been married for some time, the large majority falling in the 4 - 12 year range (reapplicants were probably in the upper group), with a median at 7.8 years. They also exhibited stable marital histories, with the current marriage as the first and only one for 87 percent of the couples in the sample. Neither of these were surprising findings in view of couples' attempts to have children of their own, the nature of the decision they had to make, and agency requirements with respect to fertility, to mention but a few.

Table 3-27

The Relationship of Duration of Marriage and Agency Outcome
(Percent of Total)

	Duration of Marriage					
Agency Outcome	Under 4 years	4 - 8 years	8 - 12 years	12 - 16 years	16 Years and over	Don't Know
Couple was accepted	42	55	61	59	37	--
Couple withdrew, were good prospects	18	16	10	11	4	--
Couple withdrew, were poor prospects	5	4	8	5	22	--
Couple was rejected	35	25	21	25	37	100
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100
(N)	(40)	(166)	(100)	(63)	(27)	(2)

Couples married from 4-16 years had a somewhat better chance of being in the "Accepted" or Good Prospects" group. About 70 percent in each of the three duration groups (4-8, 8-12, and 12-16 years) fell into the two acceptable categories, whereas a lower percentage of such couples were located in the two tails of the duration distribution.

Most probably age, as an antecedent variable, had a bearing on these findings.

Table 3-28

Total Number of Children

(Natural, Adopted; In or Out of the Home)

Children	Percent of Total
None	65
One	27
Two	6
Three or more	2
Total	100
(N)	(398)

Table 3-29

Total Number of Children (Natural, Adopted; In or Out of the Home) by Agency Outcome

(Percent of Total)

	Number of Children			
Agency Outcome	None	One	Two	Three or More
Couple was accepted	52	61	62	25
Couple withdrew, were judged good prospects	15	10	8	--
Couple withdrew, were judged poor prospects	4	10	12	12
Couple was rejected	29	19	17	62
Total	100	100	99	99
(N)	(259)	(107)	(24)	(8)

A little over one-third of the couples who composed the sample in our eight agencies were already parents at the time they applied. But whether a couple already had one or two children, or had none at all made little difference in the likelihood of their being subsequently accepted by an agency, or at least, being judged "Good Prospects." On the other hand, couples with three or more children were not as likely to be accepted, although the scarcity of these in the sample made us pause about any sort of generalization.

An F test performed on the relationship of worker's impression of couples as prospects for adoption and the total number of children in the home was significant ($F_{3/394} = 4.94$, $P < .01$), but the magnitude of the effect, as measured by epsilon, was trivial, with only three percent of the variability of worker impression scores associated with the "total number of children in the home" variable.

Table 3-30

Total Number of Adopted Children in the Home

Children		Percent of Total
None		78
One		19
Two		3
Three +		0*
	Total	100
	(N)	(398)

*Quantity more than 0% but less than .6% (we used the rule of rounding up to the nearest even number).

Table 3-31
The Relationship of Total Number of Adopted Children in the Home and Agency Outcome
(Percent of Total)

	Number of Children			
Agency Outcome	**None**	**One**	**Two**	**Three or More**
Couple was accepted	49	73	92	--
Couple withdrew, were judged good prospects	14	11	8	--
Couple withdrew, were judged poor prospects	7	3	--	--
Couple was rejected	30	14	--	100
Total	100	101	100	100
(N)	(311)	(74)	(12)	(1)

Of the 22 percent who had at least one adopted child already at home, a large majority had just one such child. Those couples with one or two adopted children were more likely to be in the "Accepted" group of applicants than those who had not previously adopted. Also, among couples with two adopted children there were no couples rejected or considered "Poor Prospects" as opposed to 27 percent of the couples with one adopted child who fell into this category. An analysis of variance performed on the "worker impression" variable, using the total number of adopted children as the grouping variable, yielded significant results ($F_{4/393} = 12.89$, $P < .01$). Eleven percent of the variability among impression scores was associated with the "adopted children in the home" variable, which was considered a material result. This pointed to a gradual agency screening operation as cumulative knowledge about a given couple resulted in a better assessment of them in the adoptive parent role. Self-selection may also have played a part among couples with two adopted children, with only the most "Satisfied" and "Successful" couples returning a third time. Unfortunately the presence of only one couple with three or more adopted children made any statement about this group impossible.

Table 3-32

Total Number of Natural Children in the Home

Children	Percent of Total
None	87
One, present marriage	8
Two, present marriage	2
Three +, present marriage	2
One, previous marriage	1
Two +, previous marriage	1
Total	101
(N)	(398)

When we examined couples with natural born children (and excluded the "previous marriage" categories because of the paucity of couples) the picture was different. Here a larger proportion of those with no children (58 percent) was accepted than in the other three groups with natural children. Combining all the above child categories yielded the same results (Table 3-34), with 33 percent of the couples with one or more natural children in the "Accepted" category. These results reflected, in part, the higher acceptance rate among those couples who had at least one adopted child in the home, but had no natural children. When we excluded this group of couples our findings remained essentially the same although the percentage of accepted couples with no child dropped from 58 percent to 47 percent.

Table 3-33

The Relationship of Total Number of Natural Children in the Home and Agency Outcome

(Percent of Total)

		Number of Children				
Agency Outcome	None	One, Present Marriage	Two, Present Marriage	Three or More, Present Marriage	One, Previous Marriage	Two or More, Previous Marriage
Couple was accepted	58	39	17	17	67	--
Couple withdrew, were judged good prospects	13	12	17	--	--	--
Couple withdrew, were judged poor prospects	3	27	50	17	--	--
Couple was rejected	26	21	17	67	33	100
Total	100	99	101	101	100	100
(N)	(347)	(33)	(6)	(6)	(3)	(3)

Table 3-34

The Relationship of Total Number of Natural Children in the Home and Agency Outcome

(Percent of Total)

Agency Outcome	None in Home	One or More in Home
Couple was accepted	58	33
Couple withdrew, were judged good prospects	13	10
Couple withdrew, were judged poor prospects	3	25
Couple was rejected	26	31
Total	100	99
(N)	(347)	(51)

d. Applicants' Family Background

Table 3-35

Applicants' Total Number of Siblings

Siblings	Husband (Percent of	Wife Total)
None	12	13
One	24	25
Two	22	17
Three	12	13
Four or more	20	21
Don't know	12	12
Total	102	101
(N)	(398)	(398)

Table 3-36

Applicants' Ordinal Position

Position	Husband (Percent of	Wife Total)
Only child	12	13
First	23	28
Second	24	20
Third	12	11
Fourth or more	15	15
Don't know	16	14
Total	102	101
(N)	(398)	(398)

Few of the applicants in our study stemmed from homes where they were the sole offspring, and a sizeable proportion of those with siblings were not first born (68 percent of the husbands and 62 percent of the wives). These results led us to speculate whether such multi-sibling family constellations had some bearing on the child orientation (and motivation for parenthood) of one or another marital partner. In other words, we wondered whether applicants who came from backgrounds that included siblings tended to value children more than those who were only children, and therefore were more likely to apply for adoption.

Table 3-37

Were Applicants Reared in a Broken Home?

Family Status	Husband	Wife
	(Percent of Total)	
Yes, Broken Home	20	24
No Breaks	72	69
Don't know	8	7
Total	100	100
(N)	(398)	(398)

On the whole the applicants came from unbroken home environments, with 72 percent of the husbands and 69 percent of the wives experiencing no discontinuity in being reared with both natural parents until at least age 16. Among the husbands, 11 percent had experienced the death of one or both natural parents, while eight percent of the families were divorced or separated, and one percent sustained long separations for reasons such as illness, institutionalization, etc., of at least one parent. Fourteen percent of the wives had, during childhood, experienced the death of one or both parents, nine percent had been exposed to separation or divorce, and one percent had lived through lengthy separations for other reasons. Among both husbands and wives 10 percent of these instances had occurred prior to the time they were eight years of age.

Moving once again from factual material to judgment data, the caseworkers judged 61 percent of the husbands and 62 percent of the wives as having felt closest to one or both parents (as opposed to someone else) during their growing years, while 24 percent of the husbands' and 34 percent of the wives' attachments to one or both their parents were perceived as "Very Strong."

The designation of the applicants' parents' "usual occupation" were recorded on a decile scale based on the original 1947 North-Hatt occupational prestige SES Index discussed previously (p. 72). Given decile scores of 1 - 10 both the wives' and husbands' fathers median occupational prestige rating fell in the eighth decile, whereas the majority of the wives' and husbands' mothers were in the "housewife" category.

Among applicant wives the majority were also in the housewife category, whereas the median among husbands was in the ninth decile. It appeared therefore that husband applicants had risen above their fathers in occupational prestige.

e. Some Marital Characteristics and the Question of Infertility

In a majority of instances the applicants in our sample were judged to have a traditional role relationship in their marriage. We treated this variable as ordinal, as going from most to least

Table 3-38

Caseworker Ratings of Roles Assumed in Marriage

Marital Roles	Percent of Total
The husband and wife tend to assume the traditional roles in their relationship to each other	72
There is no clear division of roles by this couple; an equalitarian principle seems to operate	20
Many of the traditional male and female roles seem to be reversed in this couple's relationship	6
Don't know	2
Total	100
(N)	(398)

Table 3-39

Caseworker Ratings of Stability of Marriage

Stability	Percent of Total
Above average	45
Average	45
Below average	9
Don't know	2
Total	101
(N)	(398)

traditional, and noted that its relationship to the caseworkers' overall impression of couples as prospects for adoptive parenthood (as measured by a Pearson product moment correlation coefficient, r = .29) was in a positive direction, significant, but low. On the other hand, the judged stability of the marriage correlated substantially (r = .65) with caseworker impression. In other words, there was a stronger association between caseworkers' impression of the couples' suitability and judged marital stability than there was with assessed roles, no causal link being implied (differences were significantly different from zero at the two-tailed .01 level).[1]

Table 3-40

Medical Reason for Couple's Inability to Have Natural Child

Reason	Percent of Total
Husband infertile	23
Wife infertile	30
Husband and wife infertile	10
Repeated miscarriages	7
Repeated stillbirths	1
Failure to conceive but cause of infertility unclear	23
Not infertile: have children of their own	3
No medical report, don't know and other	2
Total	99
(N)	(398)

Table 3-41

Medical Prospects for Couple's Having Their Own Child

Prospects	Percent of Total
Possible	14
Doubtful	45
Impossible	26
Inadvisable	6
No medical report, don't know	9
Total	100
(N)	(398)

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[1] Edwards, A. L., Experimental Design in Psychological Research, Holt, Rinehart and Winston, New York: 1964, p. 85.

Table 3-42

Wife's Number of Pregnancies

Number	Percent of Total
Never	70
One time	15
Two times	7
Three or more	8
Don't know	0*
Total	100
(N)	(398)

*Quantity more than 0% but less than .6% (we used the rule of rounding up to the nearest even number).

Table 3-43

Time of Wife's Last Pregnancy

Time	Percent of Total
Never pregnant	70
During past two years	7
2 - 4 years ago	8
5 - 7 years ago	6
Over 7 years ago	7
Don't know	1
Total	99
(N)	(398)

We noted in Table 3-40 that although more precise knowledge of the reason for infertility in the "unclear cause" category could have altered other percentages considerably, the proportions as they stood pointed to a slightly higher percent of infertility among wives than among the husbands in our sample. And when available medical reports were considered, the prospects of couples having their own child were in the majority of instances doubtful or impossible. For 14 percent of the applicants such prospects were deemed possible. These included the "not infertile" group from Table 3-40 above, plus those couples where medical reports indicated that the prospects of a successful pregnancy was still a possibility, although the reason for infertility was specified.

When we looked at the relationship of agency outcome to couples' prospects of having their own child we noted that couples who were rated in the "doubtful" or "impossible" categories in Table 3-41 had a considerably higher rate of acceptance (61 percent and 69 percent respectively) by the agencies than did couples in other categories. In the "possible" category 40 percent were in the accepted group, while in the "inadvisable" category 41 percent were accepted. The rejection rates in these four prospect categories were conversely much lower in the "doubtful" and "impossible" categories than in the other two categories.

In the majority of cases, the wife had never been pregnant. Of the 30 percent who had been pregnant at least once, the median time of its last occurrence was 22 months previously. We recognized that this length was artificially exaggerated, for in instances where studies were completed over a period of time, that time affected which category was checked since questionnaires were not completed until home studies were finished.

The applicants in the sample had by and large spent much time seeking medical advice for their infertility condition prior to their turning to an adoption facility. Although the time ranged from "never" (five percent) to "over two years" (42 percent), this latter was the largest single category, with the median falling at 22 months. We were also interested in knowing, with respect to initial applicants, how much time had elapsed between confirmation of their inability to have a child naturally and their initial contact with an adoption agency. Confirmation was here defined psychologically, and referred to the time the couple themselves affirmed the problem. Among those where there was confirmation, this time ranged from "less than six months" (12 percent) to "over two years" (20 percent) with the median at 16 months. Such a length of time seemed to lend support to the notion that some time is necessary, a moratorium of a sort, for couples to begin to come to terms with their infertility and to accept the idea of adopting a child, or at least to reach the point where they can directly act on that idea.

f. Some Applicant Preferences

Seventy percent of the husbands and 71 percent of the wives in our sample were recorded as having a stated age preference of one year or some lower cut-off level (Table 3-44). Sixty-five percent of these couples were rated "outstanding" or "good" prospects for adoptive parenthood, whereas two-thirds of that tiny fraction of applicants who preferred a child "over 5 years" were rated "poor" prospects. Couples were thought to agree fairly well on desired age, 88 percent of them rated as showing no discrepancy with respect to their preference.

Table 3-44

Caseworker Report of Couple's Stated Preference with Respect to Age of Child

Age	Husband	Wife
	(Percent of Total)	
Under 3 months	13	16
Up to 6 months	22	23
Up to 1 year	35	32
Up to 2 years	11	11
Up to 3 years	9	9
Up to 5 years	4	5
Over 5 years	2	2
No preference	2	1
Don't know	1	1
Total	99	100
(N)	(398)	(398)

An interesting sidelight emerged when we looked at age preference in the sub-study of applicant self-ratings (not included in this report but previously discussed in Chapter II). These ratings were obtained prior to any interviews the couple had in their current agency contact, and focused on only two of the agencies in the study (as far as we know these two agencies, which included 86 applicant couples, were representative of the total group). Here we noted that although the total proportion of couples preferring a one year old or some lower age group (about 70 percent) remained very close to the stated age preference as recorded by the caseworkers, there was a substantial discrepancy between couples' self reports and the workers' recording when we looked at the more refined classification of preference for a child "under 3 months." Here 34 percent of the husbands and 43 percent of the wives indicated such an age preference whereas in the caseworker recordings the proportions were considerably lower. This seemed indicative of three possibilities: 1) that couples in their interviews indicated greater flexibility with respect to age preference as a "best-foot-forward" device, 2) that caseworkers enlarged on the couple's preference in line with the availability of children, or 3) that couples in fact became more flexible in response to the reality of what they were told about the availability of children once they had contact with an agency.

Table 3-45

Couple's Stated Preference with Respect to Sex of Child

Preference	Percent of Total
Couple prefers boy	24
Couple prefers girl	34
One prefers boy, one prefers girl	0*
No preference	38
Don't know	3
Total	99
(N)	(398)

*Quantity more than 0% but less than .6% (we used the rule of rounding up to the nearest even number).

Thirty-four percent of the applicants were recorded as having a stated preference for a girl. Such a greater preference for girls over boys is not unusual in adoption agency experience. In our self-rating sample of 86 couples we observed with interest that such a sex preference differential varied when husbands and wives were separately considered. Although wives preferred girls (33 percent) over boys (17 percent) the proportions were reversed with respect to husbands, 21 percent of whom expressed a preference for a girl while 34 percent of them wanted a boy. If this sub-sample was representative of the larger group (as we assumed it was) we wondered whether this meant that something was communicated to the husbands once they were face to face with the realities of adoption which changed their mind, or that husbands deferred to their wives when they voiced a preference within the agency setting, or that the explanation lay elsewhere.

g. Some Attitudes About the Revelation of Adoption

In Table 3-46 we again compared the worker ratings of applicants in eight agencies with couple self-reports in two agencies, on the assumption that the two were, at least with respect to this variable comparable. The self-ratings were obtained prior to agency interviews, while the casework ratings followed one or more interviews and therefore reflected changes that may have occurred during the couples' contact with the agencies. We in fact did ask caseworkers

Table 3-46

Age Couple Favors Telling Child of His Adoption (Percent of Total)

Age of Child	Worker Report of Couple's Preference	Husband's Self-Report	Wife's Self-Report
Under 3 years	44	6	19
3 - 5 years	37	40	40
5 - 7 years	7	20	22
7 - 9 years	2	15	7
Over 9 years	1	8	5
Never	1	4	5
Don't know, other	8	8	4
Total	100	101	102
(N)	(398)	(86)	(86)

whether couples had, over the course of interviews, changed with regard to their ideas about the preferred age for revelation, and in 11 percent of the cases the workers indicated that such had occurred. Nevertheless, given the figures in Table 3-46, the majority of worker reports were at a lower age level than the couples'. The reason for this may have been that 1) the couples became more knowledgable about preferred adoption practices and agency expectations between the time of self-ratings and their interviews at the agency, 2) the workers were responding more to their own predilections than to the couples' opinions, 3) couples were more candid in the self-ratings than in the interview situation where they may have been responding, in part, to external cues, or 4) the sub-sample from the two agencies was not representative of the full sample of couples.

An analysis of variance performed on this "age of revelation" variable, using the worker's impression of the couple as prospects for adoptive parenthood as the grouping variable, yielded results that were significant ($F_{4/393} = 14.05$, $P < .01$). Following the calculation of epsilon ($\in^2 = .12$), we could say that the magnitude of this effect was of moderate proportions. In other words, couples' preference for an earlier age of adoption revelation was associated with more favorable worker impression of those couples, and the hypothesis that this was on a chance basis could be rejected with considerable confidence.

The caseworkers rated 32 percent of the applicants as having "great" or "some" misgivings about revelation of the adoptive status to a child. This variable correlated -.51[1] with the criterion variable, worker impression of the couples as prospects for adoptive parenthood. In other words, there was a fairly strong associative trend in the direction of "the more misgivings about revelation the poorer the worker's impression."

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[1] *Ibid.*, p. 362. For N = 398 an r = 1.131 is significantly different from zero at the two-tailed .01 level.

Table 3-47

Caseworker Rating of Couple's Comfort About Receiving Information About Child's Biological Parents

Rating	Percent of Total
Very comfortable	39
Moderately comfortable	45
Probably not comfortable	11
Don't know	4
Total	99
(N)	(398)

Table 3-48

Caseworker Prediction of Couple's Comfort About Talking to Child About His Biological Parents

Rating	Percent of Total
Very comfortable	24
Moderately comfortable	48
Probably not comfortable	24
Don't know	4
Total	100
(N)	(398)

We noticed, not with much surprise, that more applicants were rated able to receive information about biological parents comfortably than couples rated as comfortable about passing such information along to a child. However, the correlation between the worker's general impression of the couple as adoptive prospects and the judged comfort about receiving information was $r = .54$, whereas the association between the general impression and the predicted ability of the couple to tell a child about it was $r = .64$. Again we had significant associations, this time in a positive direction, with the predicted ability to transmit information about biological parents more highly related to a positive impression of a couple for adoptive parenthood than the comfort in receiving such information. A test of the difference between the two nonindependent correlation coefficients resulted in a t = 3.27, significantly different from zero at the two-tailed .01 level.

h. Composite Profile of Applicants in General--Across All Agencies, Whether Accepted or Not

We disregarded the variations among our eight agencies (some of the separate agency findings have already been presented in the preceding material) in order to arrive at a composite portrait of the average (median or modal) applicant couple.

Mr. and Mrs. A were applying for adoption at Agency X for the first time and had had no prior contacts with other adoption facilities or private means of adoption. Mr. A was about 35 and Mrs. A about 33 years of age, both white, and of the same religious denomination. They had been born in or around a large city and were descendants from families of North American, British, East, Central, Southern European, or mixed nationalities. Their mothers tended to be housewives, and their fathers held occupations judged to have considerable prestige. Both Mr. and Mrs. A had been reared in a home undisturbed by separation, divorce, or death of a parent. Each of them had at least one sibling and was not the first born in the family. Mr. A had attended, but not completed, college, and Mrs. A was a high school graduate. The couple's joint gross income was about $11,000, but this decreased to $8,600 if they had to depend on Mr. A's income only. At the time of application, Mrs. A was not working, and the occupation held by Mr. A was located somewhat above the mid-range of the prestige continuum. They had purchased, or were in the process of purchasing, a house and lived in or near a metropolitan center.

Mr. and Mrs. A had been married to each other for about seven and one-half years. Neither of them had been married before, and their marriage was considered to be of average or above average stability. They were childless, and prospects of their having their own child were doubtful. Mrs. A had never been pregnant, and according to medical reports the infertility problem was most likely on her side. Mr. and Mrs. A had obtained medical advice about their infertility over a period of 22 months, and they turned to an adoption agency about 16 months after they were convinced by the medical findings.

Mr. and Mrs. A came to the agency requesting a child who was up to one year of age. With regard to the sex of the child they either voiced no preference or asked for a girl (although in private Mr. A may have been more inclined toward a boy). After some contact with the agency, Mr. and Mrs. A favored telling a child of his adoption status around age three, although they both had started out with the idea of a somewhat later age for revealing such information to a child. They were thought to be fairly comfortable with the idea of learning about a child's natural background although they were likely to be less comfortable about passing such information on to a child.

i. Worker Impression and Agency Outcome

Two of the most important portions of our data dealt with the distributions of our major dependent variables, a) the workers' general impression of the applicant couple as prospects for adoptive parenthood and b) agency outcome, among the eight agencies that participated in this research. We now turn to a consideration of our findings in these areas.

Fifty-eight percent of the couples in our sample were considered "Outstanding" or "Good Prospects" for adoptive parenthood, whereas only 26 percent were judged "Dubious" or "Poor Prospects" (Table 3-49). We noted a much broader range among the proportion of couples judged "Outstanding" than those rated "Good Prospects." There was a greater tendency to rate couples "Good Prospects" rather than "Outstanding" with the exception of agency 3. There a large proportion of reapplicants may have been a factor in the workers' greater use of the extreme category in their assessment of parental capacity, although it was also possible that the quality of the applicants

3

at that agency may have had some bearing on assessments.

Table 3-49

Caseworkers' Impressions of Applicants as Prospects for Adoptive Parenthood According to Agency

(Percent of Total

Worker Impression	Agency								
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	Total
Outstanding prospects for adoptive parenthood	17	5	46	13	6	12	10	24	17
Good prospects for adoptive parenthood	46	36	34	29	40	33	56	51	41
Fairly good prospects for adoptive parenthood	14	9	10	29	15	23	18	8	16
Dubious about couple as prospects for adoptive parenthood	--	23	2	11	17	25	10	10	12
Poor prospects for adoptive parenthood	23	27	8	18	21	6	6	6	14
Total	100	100	100	100	99	99	100	99	100
(N)	(48)	(56)	(50)	(45)	(52)	(48)	(50)	(49)	(398)

We were quite surprised by the results in Table 3-50. For in contrast to the commonly held notion in the community about high rejection rates, the majority of applicants to these agencies were in fact accepted. It is of course possible that many couples were screened out prior to an initial interview, but the data nonetheless were contrary

Table 3-50

The Relationship of Agency to Agency Outcome (Percent of Total)

	Agency								
Agency Outcome	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	Total
Couple was accepted	64	35	68	40	56	46	60	67	54
Couple withdrew, were judged good prospects	10	14	16	27	8	4	12	12	13
Couple withdrew, were judged poor prospects	6	7	4	7	2	4	14	6	6
Couple was rejected	19	43	12	27	35	46	14	14	26
Total	99	99	100	101	101	100	100	99	99
(N)	(48)	(56)	(50)	(45)	(52)	(48)	(50)	(49)	(398)

to the idea of a high proportion of applicant rejections. We also noted that among the proportion of rejectees, two agencies outnumbered the other six facilities by a sizeable margin. One, agency 2, had a large percentage in the "Accepted" and "Good Prospects" groups, yet also had 43 percent of its applicants in the "Rejected" category. The explanation for this was unclear. Agency 2 did not use a group meeting prior to initial interviews. This may have increased that group of couples who would have screened themselves out as a result of a grou contact with the agency, but instead enlarged the rejected category. It also may have been due to the quality of applicants interviewed, many of whom were referred by another agency in the same community which had more stringent standards as to who was acceptable.

Agency 6, on the other hand, showed a proportion of rejectees equal to those that were accepted. A possible explanation here related to this agency's use of initial interviews as a screening device followed by a group conference among supervisors and interviewers who "screened in" cases which were subsequently transferred to other workers. But it appeared that as many applicants were screened out as in. Again it was possible that the quality of applicants in the sample had a bearing on the results. However this was not altogether convincing in view of the discrepancy between these proportions and those in other agencies. We therefore wondered whether the administrative procedure of separating the intake worker and initial interview from the flow of a total study resulted in a more stringent screen-out, and therefore a larger rejection rate.

We of course wondered whether the availability of certain groups of children affected the acceptance-rejection proportions we observed. It is possible that this occurred, however we surmised from the agencies that a dearth of certain groups of children often resulted in a screen-out prior to interviews rather than a rejection on that basis following an interview.

We also noted that one agency in particular (which we have not named for reasons of confidentiality) had a fairly low acceptance rate along with a sizeable group of rejectees, yet this agency had a surplus of children available for placement. Therefore we doubted whether the available pool of children had a sizeable effect on the data we obtained.

An analysis of variance test performed on the impression variable, using agency outcome as the grouping variable, yielded significant results ($F_{3/394} = 254.38$, $P < .01$). In other words, when we compared worker impression means across the four agency outcomes we could reject the hypothesis that the impression means stemmed from the same population, or were equal across agency outcomes. When we calculated ϵ^2 we noted that 66 percent of the variance of the impression variable was associated with the agency outcome variable. In other words, there was a strong relationship between these two variables, which came as no surprise since the worker's overall impression following a series of interviews would have greatest weight in the agency's final decision about a given couple. In some cases the workers (in conjunction with their respective supervisors) were completely responsible for the decision made about a given applicant couple. And even in instances where there was some form of group decision, it was the caseworker who was the reporter through whom the information was filtered, and therefore her evaluation about a given couple was of prime importance.

Summary

In this chapter we have presented descriptive data about the 398 couples who comprised our sample of adoptive applicants. We have touched upon such areas as their source of referral to the eight agencies, whether they were initial applicants or not, and such personal characteristics as their age, race, and religious denomination. Among other variables that we discussed were the couples' attained educational level, income, and occupational prestige status. We also presented descriptive material about the applicants' marital history, whether they already had children or not, and portrayed a number of family background characteristics. We have dealt with material relating to infertility, including the medical reasons for their inability to conceive and the couples' prospects for such conception. We also scrutinized applicant preferences with respect to the age and sex of the child they hoped to adopt, as well as some of their attitudes toward revelation of the adoptive status. We related a number of these variables to agency outcome and to the caseworkers' general impression of couples as prospects for adoptive parenthood, and also looked at some differences among the eight agencies in some of the areas described. Finally, we focused on the distribution of caseworkers' overall ratings of couples as adoptive prospects, examined the proportion of couples accepted, rejected or withdrawn, and discussed some agency differences with regard to caseworkers' appraisals and agency decisions.

CHAPTER IV

THE ADOPTION CASEWORKERS

In order to obtain a description of the 87 caseworkers who provided the data on which this research was based, we asked each participant to complete a short form (see Appendix B). Although it might have been valuable to obtain more data, and of a subjective sort, we felt that we had already burdened staffs with much questionnaire material and that a battery of personal questions might have been construed as an imposition, both on time and privacy.

Table 4-1

Age (in Years) of Adoption Caseworkers

Age		Percent of Total
20-29		28
30-39		18
40-49		28
50-59		20
60 +		5
Don't know		2
	Total	101
	(N)	(87)

Table 4-2

Marital Status of Adoption Caseworkers

Marital Status		Percent of Total
Single		34
Married		53
Divorced		6
Separated		1
Widowed		6
	Total	100
	(N)	(87)

Table 4-3

Number of Children of Adoption Caseworkers

Number of Children	Percent of Total
None	62
One	10
Two	17
Three +	10
Total	99
(N)	(87)

Of the 87 adoption workers who participated in this research, 24 worked in public and 63 in private agencies. All but two of them were women. Their ages ranged from about 20 to over 60, with the median falling at 41 years. Over one-half of them were currently married. Although only 37 percent of all workers had reared at least one child of their own, this comprised 56 percent of those who had ever been married.

Fifty-seven percent of the participating adoption staffs of these eight agencies had received their degrees following two years of graduate social work education. Only two percent of the total had no formal social work training at all, although they had completed college. There was, however, wide variation among the agencies with respect to the amount of education the participants had received.[1]

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[1] Participant was here defined as any staff member who was involved in studying adoptive applicants and therefore sent us questionnaire material. The total count of those with graduate degrees in any agency was therefore probably low, as administrative staff who did not interview applicants were not included.

Table 4-4

Number of Years of Graduate Social Work Training Completed by Adoption Caseworkers in the Eight Agencies
(Percent of Total)

Number of Years of Training	Agency								
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	Total
No graduate social work training	--	33	--	--	--	--	--	--	2
Less than one year	33	67	--	--	--	32	--	--	16
One year, but less than two	17	--	--	--	15	48	14	--	18
Two years, but no degree	17	--	--	8	--	4	--	18	6
Two years, social work degree	33	--	100	92	85	16	86	82	57
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	99
(N)	(6)	(6)	(7)	(12)	(13)	(25)	(7)	(11)	(87)

Some of this variation could be accounted for by the fact that in two agencies one or more students were in training, and in several agencies length of experience in adoption work substituted for lack of formal training. When we compared the combined five private agencie with the combined three public departments, we noted with interest that in the category of those with graduate social work degrees there was essentially no difference, with 59 percent of the staff in the forme and 54 percent of the latter holding graduate degrees. On the other hand, at the lower end of the education range 33 percent of the public agencies' staff and 13 percent of those in the private agencies had less than one year or no formal social work training at all.

Table 4-5

Total Years of Employment, Full and/or Part Time, in Various Areas of Social Work

Years of Employment	Area of Social Work Employment (Percent of Total) In All Social Work	In Child Welfare	In Adoption Field
None, student field work only	6	13	13
Under 3 years	17	21	39
3-5 years	21	22	24
6-8 years	7	9	10
9-11 years	7	6	6
12-14 years	10	9	5
15 + years	32	21	3
Total	100	100	100
(N)	(87)	(87)	(87)

We also asked agency staff members to indicate the number of years of employment in various areas of social work (Table 4-5). In order to make all answers comparable, since questionnaires were returned to us at different times, we used January 1964 as the approximate mid-point of data collection, and categorized all responses with reference to that date. Although a fairly sizeable group, 23 percent, had less than three years of experience working in social work in general, almost one-third of the group had had much experience, 15 or more years, and the median fell at 8.6 years. However, as employment years were more specifically related to child welfare and adoption we noted a considerable drop in length of experience, the median in child welfare falling at 5.2 years, and the median in the adoption field falling to below three years.

Table 4-6

Total Years of Employment, Full and/or Part Time in the Field of Adoption of Caseworkers in the Eight Agencies
(Percent of Total)

Years of Employment	Agency								
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	Total
None, student field work only	--	--	--	--	8	40	--	--	13
Under 3 years	83	33	57	50	23	40	14	27	39
3-5 years	17	50	28	33	15	16	14	36	24
6-8 years	--	17	--	17	23	--	43	--	10
9-11 years	--	--	14	--	15	4	--	9	6
12-14 years	--	--	--	--	8	--	14	18	5
15 + years	--	--	--	--	8	--	14	9	3
Total	100	100	99	100	100	100	99	99	100
(N)	(6)	(6)	(7)	(12)	(13)	(25)	(7)	(11)	(87)

In Table 4-6 we focused on employment experience in the adoption field and looked at the figures for each agency. We found wide variation among the eight agencies, with agencies 5 and 7 showing the highest median years of experience in the adoption field. We also observed a general tendency of the staffs of public agencies to be at the low end of the range of adoption experience when compared with the private agencies in our sample.

We felt that in agency 6 the combination of staff size and the large percent who fell at the lowest levels of adoption experience may have depressed the median for the total group. On recalculation, excluding agency 6, the median years of employment experience in the adoption field did rise somewhat, to four years.

Table 4-7

Total Number of Years Adoption Caseworkers were Employed in their Present Agency Work

Years of Employment	Percent of Total
None, student field work only	13
Under 1 year	31
1-2 years	13
3-5 years	19
6-8 years	9
9-11 years	5
12-14 years	5
15 + years	5
Total	100
(N)	(87)

We noted with interest that the percentage of those with six years and more adoption employment experience coincided fairly closely with the proportion of those employed in their present work at a given agency for the same time period. Below this point (except for the student level) there was a somewhat greater difference, though still not large, between the two sets of figures. It appeared, therefore, that adoption workers, particularly those with more experience, tended to accumulate their adoption experience at a particular agency rather than moving around among several agencies.

Table 4-8

Title of Position Held by Adoption Caseworkers During Course of the Research

Title of Position	Percent of Total
Supervisor	24
Senior Caseworker	17
Caseworker	34
Case Aids and summer employment	12
Student	13
Total	100
(N)	(87)

Despite the fairly low median level of adoption employment experience, almost one quarter of our workers were, at the time of our study, employed in a supervisory capacity and another 17 percent were at the senior level. The majority (68 percent) of the group were in full-time employment, with five percent working less than half-time. Two-thirds of the workers carried caseloads that consisted exclusively of adoption home studies, while another 22 percent of the group devoted over three-quarters of their agency time to such work. In other words, the social workers in our sample were, in their current work, a fairly specialized group.

As we mentioned earlier in this chapter, we believed that it might have been useful to ask the staffs of these agencies for more information of a background, personality, and attitudinal variety. This would have allowed us to highlight some of the more subjective elements in the description of adoption caseworkers in our eight agencies. However, for reasons of time and confidentiality, we did not secure such data.

Summary

In this chapter we have presented some descriptive data about the 87 caseworkers who participated in this study. We have focused on their agency affiliation, their sex, age, marital status, and whether they had reared any children. We have examined the workers' attained level of education and differences among agencies in this regard. We dealt with the caseworkers' years of employment experience in social work in general, in the child welfare field, and specifically in the adoption area, analyzing the latter by agency. We also looked at the length of time caseworkers had been employed in their present agency work, whether full or part-time, the title of their position, and the amount of time the workers devoted to adoption home studies.

CHAPTER V

A FACTOR ANALYSIS OF THE CASEWORKERS' RATING FORM FOR ADOPTIVE APPLICANTS

Our approach to delineating the criteria used by social workers in their assessment of adoptive applicants was, as described in Chapter II in the section on "Statistical Analysis," a factor analytic one. The perceptual data for this analysis were the caseworkers' questionnaire responses based on interviews of each of the 398 applicant couples. The factor analytic method was chosen as the most economical means for an examination of the internal structure, the dimensions, of these perceptions. The focus, therefore, was on the underlying organization of the ratings of couples' attributes by means of a simultaneous study of the interrelationships among the clusters of all the relevant variables that comprised the content of our questionnaire. We were interested in determining whether the numerous ratings that we asked caseworkers to make were reduceable to a few underlying constructs that were basic to the caseworkers' perceptions of applicants, or whether they were independent of each other. From a statistical standpoint, the aim was to account for the variance associated with each of the variables under investigation, and to determine how much of the variance could be accounted for by a small number of underlying factors.

Our interest was, for example, in such questions as 1) whether couples who were said to be suitable for a severely deviant child were also considered suitable adoptive prospects for the child who only deviated mildly from the so-called "normal" youngster, and 2) what were some of the attributes of applicant couples that were related to assessments of a positive child-oriented motivation for adoption.

As we mentioned in Chapter II, the task we faced in this research was one of reducing a large number of caseworker ratings to manageable proportions. This was primarily a mechanical problem in that the machine program available to the investigator could handle a maximum of 70 variables at one time. The analysis was therefore carried out in two stages, an initial factor analysis of each of five sets of variables, which resulted in 41 usable clusters, which were in turn factor analyzed. The first-order clusters reflected, of necessity, the somewhat arbitrary nature of our deck splits. The clusters therefore could not be looked upon as complete entities because they were, in part, a function of the group of variables that were included in a given deck. However, as pointed out earlier, the large number of variables per deck made it unlikely that any given item would not relate to some other item and thus might have been lost in the analysis. Because of the arbitrary make-up of the clusters we have not included them in our presentation in order not to burden the reader unnecessarily. Rather, we focused on the second stage of our analysis, the factor analysis of all the usable clusters with each other. Three factors emerged from this analysis.[1] The rotated factor loadings are presented in Table 5-1.

Before beginning to interpret the meaning of each of the three final factors, a further word about the term "factor." A factor is an abstraction which statistically presents "a kind of summary statement about a group of variables operating simultaneously. A factor is largely interpreted in terms of the variables that are most heavily 'loaded' upon it, i.e., by the variables that are most highly correlated with the abstraction."[2] The column labeled h^2 represents the communality of each cluster. This told us what proportion of the total variance of a cluster variable was accounted for by all the factors.[3] For example, an h^2 of 90 signified that 90 percent of the variance of a given cluster variable could be accounted for by the three factors that emerged in our analysis.

It should be noted that the meaning attached to a given factor, in our case the 41 clusters in the first-order analysis, was the result of a process of creative interpretation on the part of the

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[1] The correlation matrix of the 41 clusters is presented in Appendix A.

[2] Fanshel, D., Toward More Understanding of Foster Parents, unpublished doctoral dissertation, Columbia University, 1960, p.183.

[3] Fruchter, B., Introduction to Factor Analysis, Princeton, New Jersey: D. Van Nostrand Company, Inc., 1954, pp. 47, 51.

Table 5-1

Rotated Factor Matrix of 41 Clusters

		Factor			
Cluster	Interpretation	I	II	III	h^2
1	Couple's acceptance of infertility status	82	-21	30	81
2	High socioeconomic status	01	72	-31	62
3	Early psychosocial maturity	34	-61	38	63
4	Low age of couple	25	-49	49	54
5	Inflexibility regarding choice of a child	-41	20	-16	23
6	Planfulness for the care of a child	38	-06	-22	20
7	Difficulty in early social functioning	-70	37	-07	63
9	Low total number of interviews	19	-11	53	33
10	Wife: health risk	-42	67	-40	79
11	Husband: health risk	-55	55	17	64
12	Empathy toward unmarried motherhood	78	36	-11	75
13	Middle class pattern of social participation	06	73	-36	67
14	Motivation: motherhood primary, childlessness unacceptable	-53	54	48	80
15	Non-punitive toward unmarried mothers	67	-49	19	72
16	Non-neurotic motivation for adoption	83	-27	26	83
18	Couple indifferent toward unmarried mothers	09	40	-40	33
19	Motivation: identification with underdog	-36	66	-42	74
20	Ambivalent about unmarried mothers	-21	-32	26	21
21	Adequacy in marital role performance	83	-39	-24	89
22	Husband: non-assertive	-39	54	04	45
23	Wife: non-assertive	-29	-02	-24	14
24	Absence of marital interdependence	-20	06	67	49
25	Husband: positive and outgoing	84	-23	23	81

(continued)

Table 5-1 (continued)

Cluster	Interpretation	Factor I	Factor II	Factor III	h^2
26	Wife: positive and outgoing	86	-07	-12	77
27	Positive quality of marital interaction	88	02	-05	77
28	Couple serious	56	-65	-18	77
29	Couple nervous	-26	-41	23	29
30	Lack of open marital friction	18	-15	73	59
31	Couple open and candid	85	34	-06	84
32	Couple suitable for moderately-severely deviant child	-37	90	-08	96
33	Wife: demanding, controlling toward children	-65	65	00	85
34	Suitable for Negro or part Negro child	-44	84	-08	90
35	Wife not overprotective toward children	61	12	16	42
36	Suitable for mild-moderately deviant child	-05	94	-01	89
37	Able to accept and cope with deviant child, development and/or behavior	-21	91	-04	87
38	Have meaningful spiritual values	61	-58	27	79
39	Wife currently non-home-centered	38	-42	12	34
40	Guarded, nonspontaneous interview behavior	-66	31	-23	59
41	Negative attitude toward adoption agencies	-60	27	-14	46
42	Increased understanding in interviews	-02	68	03	47
43	Inflexibility regarding appointments	-53	57	-12	63

investigator. This process presented the researcher with the task of seeking out the conceptual thread that tied together many different, and sometimes seemingly unrelated, variables. The interpretive or naming process tended therefore to be guided by those variables that were most highly loaded on a given factor.

It must also be remembered that every variable represented a continuum in that there were a number of response alternatives to every question. For instance, the assessment of the quality of a couple's marital interaction could have ranged from low to high. Therefore in the procedure of naming a particular variable it was arbitrary which end of the continuum the investigator focused upon as long as the interpretation of the relationship among a group of variables was consistent with the signs attached to their loadings on a factor. Some investigators have preferred to attach no qualifying label to a particular variable in a factor. In the example above, the variable would have been called "quality of marital interaction" rather than using the qualification of "positive" or "negative" as a preface. For ease of interpretation of the relationship of the variables in each factor we chose to qualify every variable. The reader must therefore remember that since each variable represents a continuum, our designations might have been reversed so long as this pertained to all variables in a factor, and therefore the meaning of the factor would not have altered.

The Factors

a. Factor I: Positive Psychosocial Appraisal

Factor I accounted for 44 percent of the common factor variance. Twenty-eight of the 41 cluster variables in our analysis were saturated on this Factor at a level of .30 or better. In Table 5-2 we have listed the 17 variables that loaded most highly on Factor I, and have excluded those clusters which had loadings of above .30 on this factor but had even higher loadings on Factors II or III.[1]

The variables with the highest loadings on the positive pole of Factor I included clusters that related to the positive quality of the couple's interaction in their marriage, flexible and outgoing characteristics of both the wife's and husband's personalities, the couple's openness, their non-neurotic motivation for adoption, their adequate marital role performance, and their acceptance of their infertility. Positive ratings also related to the couple's empathy with the problems of, and non-punitive attitude toward, unmarried mothers, the absence of difficulty in the couple's early social functioning, their open, spontaneous interview behavior, and positive attitude toward adoption agencies. The wife was described as undemanding and uncontrolling and not

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[1] In Table 5-1 a few clusters appear with equal loadings on two factors. Such apparent ties were due to rounding, and we adhered to the rule of selecting the higher loading in assigning that cluster to a particular factor.

Table 5-2

Factor I:* Positive Psychosocial Appraisal

Cluster	Loading	Cluster Interpretation and Listing of Questionnaire Questions (see Appendix B) Comprising Each Cluster
27	.88	Couple rated as having a positive quality of marital interaction (Questions: 85u, v, x, j, g, h, q, c, w, i)
26	.86	Wife's personality described as positive and outgoing (Questions: 82ff, hh, gg, mm, jj, z, dd, ii, 85y, 83m)
31	.85	Couple rated as open and candid (Questions: 99l, 91b, 99c, j, 91d, 99a, 101, 99m, d, 91a, 86, 91c, 99k, 93, 85l, 99k, 89, 85m, aa, 94h, b)
25	.84	Husband's personality described as positive and outgoing (Questions: 82a, n, m, l, i, j, p, o, f, 101, 83f, d)
16	.83	Couple rated as having non-neurotic motivation for adoption (Questions: 66s, h, d, f, q, o, a, 101, 82a, u, 66l, 81j, g)
21	.83	Rating of couple's adequacy in marital role performance (Questions: 85o, a, b, s, e, f, p, t, d, k, 82cc, 85r)
1	.82	Rating of couple's acceptance of infertility status (Questions: 68f, g, d, b, 101, 68h, 57a, 56a, 68a, 57b, 52, 34a, 56b)
12	.78	Couple rated as empathic with respect to unmarried motherhood (Questions: 72c, a, k, i, f, n, 77, 79, 82d, c, w, 73, 82x)
7	.70**	Couple rated as not having difficulty in early social functioning (Questions: 39g, b, a, f, 34c, 39i, d, e, 35)
15	.67	Couple rated as having non-punitive attitude toward unmarried mothers (Questions: 72g, l, j, o, d, b)
40	.66**	Couple rated as exhibiting unguarded, spontaneous interview behavior (Questions: 99n, e, r, i)
33	.65**	Wife rated as undemanding and uncontrolling in her attitude toward children (Questions: 94l, f, k, j, n, i)
35	.61	Wife rated as not exhibiting an overprotective attitude toward children (Questions: 94m, c, g, e, a, 97d, 98b)

(continued)

Table 5-2 (continued)

Cluster	Loading	Cluster Interpretation and Listing of Questionnaire Questions (see Appendix B) Comprising Each Cluster)
38	.61	Couple rated as having meaningful spiritual values (Questions: 85bb, n)
41	.60**	Couple rated as exhibiting positive attitude toward adoption agencies (Questions: 99p, g, 101)
5	.41**	Couple rated as flexible regarding their preference of choice of a child (Questions: 60b, a, 65b, a)
6	.38	Couple rated as planful for the care of a child (Questions: 58b, 13a, 58c, a, 23)

*Only loadings of .30 or above are presented here. This .30 criterion, although arbitrarily chosen, has been conventionally used in many factor analysis studies. In instances where a cluster emerged with a loading of over .30 on several factors, it is reported as part of that factor on which it had the highest loading.

**Sign of loading and verbal label reversed for ease of interpretation.

overprotective in her attitude toward children. The couple was also considered to have meaningful spiritual values.

At the negative pole of this factor the caseworker's assessment stressed problematic marital interaction and personality characteristics that were neither outgoing, flexible, candid, nor open. Their motivation for adoption was considered to have a neurotic base, and the adoption worker questioned the degree to which the couple accepted their infertility. Their attitude toward unmarried mothers was unsympathetic. They were rated as having difficulties in early socialization. Their interview behavior was considered unspontaneous and they expressed a negative attitude toward adoption agencies. In relation to her attitude toward children, the wife was seen as demanding, controlling, and overprotective.

Some of the variables that were not loaded highly on this factor were such items as high socio-economic status, a couple's middle class patterns of social participation, their youth, and short duration of marriage. Their suitability for a mild or moderately deviant child and deviant child development and/or behavior also showed low loadings except in the more severely deviant child category, where the loading was in a negative direction.

In the process of naming this factor we were struck by the notion that we were here tapping a major evaluative dimension, that is, a global appraisal by caseworkers of couples as prospects for adoptive parenthood. Many variables appeared to cluster together along this one general appraisal dimension (rather than a set of separate and distinct discriminations) resulting in an overall positive or negative assessment of the applicants. However, the emergence of two other factors, one of which appeared in length equal to Factor I, signified that more than one conceptual dimension was operating in caseworkers' assessments of adoptive applicants.

b. Factor II: Suitability for Deviant Child

Factor II accounted for 42 percent of the common factor variance. Twenty-eight of the 41 cluster variables in our analysis were loaded on this Factor at a level of .30 or higher. The 18 variables that correlated most highly with Factor II appear in Table 5-3. Once again we excluded those variables that had loadings on this factor above .30 but appeared with even higher loadings on other factors, although these variables were considered in our interpretation of this factor.

The four items that stood out most clearly in the factor were all related to a couple's assessed suitability for children who deviated in some way, whether physically, emotionally, nationally, or racially, from the so-called "normal" child. Also related were a couple's middle class patterns of social participation and their position in the upper portions of the socio-economic continuum in our sample. This suggested some conceptual association between perceived ability to handle some of the problems connected with child deviance and a

Table 5-3

Factor II:* Suitability for Deviant Child

Cluster	Loading	Cluster Interpretation and Listing of Questionnaire Questions (see Appendix B) Comprising Each Cluster
36	.94	Couple rated as suitable for mild-moderately deviant child (Questions: 96r, 95, 96f, v, l, n, w, a, h, b, d, s, 85z)
37	.91	Couple rated as able to accept and cope with deviant child development and/or behavior (Questions: 97e, b, c, a, f)
32	.90	Couple rated as suitable for moderate-severely deviant child (Questions: 96m, o, c, e, k, p, i, u, g, q)
34	.84	Couple rated as suitable for Negro or part Negro child (Questions: 96t, j)
13	.73	Couple rated as having middle class patterns of social participation (Questions: 81b, 80, 81d, a, f, l, m, i, 82v, b, 84, 70, 81e)
2	.72	Couple's rated high socio-economic status (Questions: 15a, 11a, 11b, 15b, 51)
42	.68	Couple rated as using interviews as means of increasing understanding of self and children (Questions: 99o, f)
10	.67	Wife rated as health risk (Questions: 46b, 39b, 47b)
19	.66	Couple rated as motivated for adoption based on identification with underdog (Questions: 66u, j)
28	.65**	Couple perceived to be not serious (Questions: 82nn, t)
3	.61**	Couple rated as having experienced early psycho-social maturity (Questions: 42b, a, 44b, 34d, 44a, 34b, 41a)
43	.57	Couple rated as inflexible in planning and keeping appointments at the agency (Questions: 99q, h)
11	.55	Husband rated as health risk (Questions: 46a, 47a)
22	.54	Husband rated as non-assertive (Questions: 82k, 83c, 82e, r, h, g; 84, 83e)

(continued)

Table 5-3 (continued)

Cluster	Loading	Cluster Interpretation and Listing of Questionnaire Questions (see Appendix B) Comprising Each Cluster
14	.54	Couple rated as motivated for adoption because they believe that motherhood is primary, childlessness unacceptable (Questions: 66m, b, r, n, g, 81k, 66c, e, p)
39	.42**	Wife rated as currently home-centered (Questions: 98a)
29	.41**	Couple rated as not nervous (Questions: 82kk, t)
20	.32**	Couple rated as unambivalent about unmarried mothers (Questions: 72m, e)

*Only loadings of .30 or above are presented here. This .30 criterion, although arbitrarily chosen, has been conventionally used in many factor analysis studies. In instances where a cluster emerged with a loading of over .30 on several factors, it is reported as part of that factor on which it had the highest loading.

**Sign of loading and verbal label reversed for ease of interpretation.

couple's community consciousness and involvement as well as their economic and educational position.

It was of interest to us that our findings here did not agree with those of Maas[1] in his study of a sample of children placed in nine communities across the U.S.A. He noted that the "different" child's adoptive parents tended to be in lower educational and income categories than those couples who adopted the "normal" child. Also, in a study by Kadushin,[2] comparing 91 families who had adopted children with special needs with 91 families who had adopted "normal" children, he noted a tendency for the latter group of adoptive parents to be better educated, although he found little difference between the two groups as to income levels. We wondered whether some of the differences in our findings were due to regional factors and the fact that we were dealing primarily with a sample of applicants living in the environs of a fairly prosperous urban community. However, we were more inclined to view the observed dissimilarities as the result of differences in the nature of our study. Our focus was on the social workers' ratings as to their estimate of applicants' suitability for the "different" child, whereas Maas and Kadushin examined what actually occurred in practice. In other words, we were tapping attitudinal factors which may not have reflected the couples' preferences or the compromises they were willing to make in order to obtain a child. Possibly social workers do feel (as was true in our study) that higher education and income are associated with couples' greater suitability for the child who deviates from the normal, although in actual practice this association may not obtain.

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[1] Maas, H. S., "The Successful Adoptive Parent Applicant," Social Work, Vol. 5, No. 1 (1960), pp. 14-20.

[2] Kadushin, A., "A Study of Adoptive Parents of Hard-to-Place Children," Social Casework, Vol. XLIII, No. 5 (1962), pp. 227-233.

And now to return to our Factor II. Motivationally, the couple was assessed as identifying with the underdog and nonacceptance of childlessness, whereas motivation based on an intrinsic liking for children was negatively related although the loading was a low one. The husbands and wives were rated as risky with respect to their health status (which coincides with Kadushin's[1] findings), the husband's personality was assessed as non-assertive, the wife was assessed as having a demanding and controlling attitude toward children, and they were located at the older age range of our sample. Their attitude toward unmarried mothers was, on the whole, not seen as positive. They were rated as having matured early psychosocially, and as having experienced difficulties in their early socialization. With respect to their agency contact they were considered as using the agency as a means of increasing their understanding of themselves and children, yet were rated as inflexible in their appointment planning and were seen as guarded and nonspontaneous in their interview behavior. This combination seemed to us contradictory, and therefore puzzling, unless it meant that the workers tended to concentrate their efforts in working with these more marginal families in order to effectuate changes that would increase their self understanding and readiness to assume the role of adoptive parents. This speculation gained credence when we noted that, indeed, the loading on this factor with respect to the total number of interviews, although low, meant that there was an association between Factor II and a larger number of interviews. An additional interpretation of the seeming contradiction was that among couples who were considered guarded and unspontaneous, a small increase in their self understanding, etc., might have been given relatively more weight by the caseworkers than a similar tendency on the part of couples who were already seen as well motivated, flexible, positive and outgoing.

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[1] *Ibid.*, p. 229.

Some of the variables at the polar opposite of this factor describe the couple as unsuitable for the deviant child, assessed as having a social orientation other than middle class and of low socio-economic status. These were younger couples who did not present a health risk. They were not rated as identifying with the underdog and had a positive attitude toward unmarried mothers.

Some of the clusters with the highest loadings on Factor I, such as the positive quality of marital interaction and positive personality description of husband and wife, non-neurotic motivation for adoption, adequacy in marital role performance, the couple's acceptance of infertility, either had very low or negative loadings on Factor II. It should therefore come as no surprise to the reader that the correlation between Factor I and II was negative.

c. Factor III: Young Marriage

Factor III accounted for 14 percent of the common factor variance. Twelve of the 41 cluster variables in the analysis were loaded on this Factor at a level of .30 or above. The five variables that correlated most highly with Factor III appear in Table 5-4. Again we excluded variables with loadings over .30 if they appeared with higher loadings on other factors.

Our interpretation of this factor focused on young marriage and an early screening decision related to the couples' youth and possible marital inexperience. These also were couples with few interviews. Lack of open marital friction and absence of marital interdependence both had sizeable loadings on this factor. These associations fit in with the notion of couples who have little marital experience, in that interdependence was not as likely to have developed and open friction may not have been present, or not in evidence in a brief number of interviews. Other loadings on this factor suggested that these were couples at the lower range of socio-economic status, who were assessed as exhibiting a lack of a middle class pattern of social participation, which may have been a factual and perceived product of their age. Also associated with the young marriage interpretation were positive loadings on two motivation for adoption clusters. These were "motherhood primary, childlessness unacceptable" and an assessment of the motivation as not being based on an identification with the underdog. Although our interpretation here was tentative, these ratings did make sense for the young couple whose inability to conceive placed greater weight on their unacceptable childlessness than on a more child oriented motivation for adoption. Other clusters that

Table 5-4
Factor III:* Young Marriage

Cluster	Loading	Cluster Interpretation and Listing of Questionnaire Questions (see Appendix B) Comprising Each Cluster
30	.73	Couple's marital relationship rated as devoid of open marital friction (Questions: 83a, h, k)
24	.67	Couple rated as exhibiting absence of marital interdependence (Questions: 83g, n, e, i)
9	.53	Low total number of interviews (Question: 5)
4	.49	Low age of couple (Questions: 9b, a, 19)
18	.40**	Couple rated as not indifferent toward unmarried motherhood (Questions: 72p, h, 81c)

*Only loadings of .30 or above are presented here. This .30 criterion, although arbitrarily chosen, has been conventionally used in many factor analysis studies. In instances where a cluster emerged with a loading of over .30 on several factors, it is reported as part of that factor on which it had the highest loading.

**Sign of loading and verbal label reversed for ease of interpretation.

loaded on this factor were acceptance of infertility status, early psychosocial maturity, and lack of risk with respect to health.

At the negative pole of this factor caseworker assessments stressed marital friction and interdependence, along with older age of the couple, unresolved infertility, and many interviews. This suggested to us that there may have been a group of applicants who were assessed as deviating in some respects who were seen over a period of time before a decision was made about their suitability as adoptive prospects. On the other hand, at the positive pole it suggested an applicant group who were seen briefly, screened out primarily because of their youth, possibly with the suggestion that they return at a later date.

This factor had a low positive correlation with Factor I, hence was meagerly associated with a global positive appraisal of a couple. We suspected that this was in large measure a function of the number of interviews, for at the negative pole couples were screened out quickly, while at the positive pole the difficulty of assessing couples in a brief number of interviews undoubtedly influenced the ratings. Factor III's correlation with Factor II, however, was significantly negative, which suggested that young couples who were not married long were either not deemed suitable for children that deviated in some way, or tended to express a preference for children who did not deviate, which influenced the social workers' ratings.

The Reliability of the Factor Scores

The total variance of any variable can be subdivided into three types: common, specific, and error variance. Common variance is that portion of the total variance which correlates with other variables. Specific variance is the portion of variance that is unique, i.e., that does not correlate with other variables. Error variance is due to errors of sampling, measurement and many other influences that contribute to unreliability. It is the combination of common and specific variance which make up the reliable variance, indicated by the reliability coefficient.[1] Inherent in this is the additive assumption of factor analysis that the total variance of a set of variables is the sum of their component variances.[2]

The reliability coefficient represents the proportion of the variance of our obtained cluster scores which is due to the variance of the true scores.[3] In other words, we must consider the clusters we obtained as a sample from a domain of clusters that are comparable (i.e., items might have been differently worded, etc.) to the ones we used. When we talk about true score we are referring to an abstraction, and our obtained factor scores are a measure of thatabstraction.

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[1] Fruchter, B., op. cit., p. 45.

[2] Fruchter, B., op. cit., p. 46.

[3] McNemar, Q., Psychological Statistics, New York, John Wiley and Sons, Inc., 1962, p. 147.

Therefore, the reliability coefficient represents the correlation of the observed factor score with that score that our applicant couples would have obtained on a comparable set of clusters from the total cluster domain. Tryon has interpreted this as domain validity.[1]

We can also interpret the reliability of a factor score as the proportion of variance of the subjects' observed scores which is due

Table 5-5

Reliability of Factor Scores*

Factor	**Reliability Coefficient**
I	.94
II	.90
III	.69

***The equation we utilized to arrive at the reliability coefficient was Cronbach's alpha coefficient[2]:**

$$r_{xx} = \frac{k}{k-1}\left(1 - \frac{\sum_{i=1}^{k} s_i^2}{s_x^2}\right)$$

k = the total number of clusters used in developing a given factor score

s_x^2 = the variance of the factor score

s_i^2 = the variance of a cluster utilized in a factor score

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[1] Tryon, R. C., "Reliability and Behavior Domain Validity: Reformulation and Historical Critique," Psychological Bulletin, Vol. 54, No. 3 (1957), pp. 229-249.

[2] Cronbach, L. J., "Coefficient Alpha and the Internal Structure of Tests," Psychometrika, Vol. XVI, 1951, pp. 297-334.

to the common factor running through them. In other words, it is the variance among our applicants' scores due to the differences between them on a particular factor (rather than error variability).

It should be noted that the reliability coefficients listed in Table 5-5 cannot be interpreted as measuring reliability among workers or across time. They do, however, indicate the stability of the item sets within each factor vis-a-vis an alternative comparable set of clusters from the cluster domain. That is, if another investigator had completed a similar study composed of questions from the same item domain, the correlation between Factor I in our study and that investigator's results would have been .94. In this sense, we interpreted Factors I and II as highly stable, whereas Factor III's stability was of moderate proportions.

We could also say that with respect to factor scores I, II, and III, 94%, 90%, and 69% (respectively) of the variance of our subjects' observed scores was associated with a common factor. Given the size of our sample, we therefore felt secure in drawing research conclusions based on our data, although the moderate reliability of factor score III was considered risky for predictive purposes.

It follows from the above discussion that $1 - r_{xx}$ gives the proportion of error variance, due to errors of measurement[1] (random unsystematic errors). In our case it was a measure of the discrepancy between our factor scores and those that would have been obtained from a comparable item set drawn from the total domain. With reference to factor scores I, II, and III the amount of error variance contributed was .06, .10, and .31 respectively. More specifically with reference to our study, error variance might have been due to caseworkers' fluctuations in completing various parts of our questionnaire, which would have affected different clusters of items. It should be added that measurement error which is random and unsystematic is unavailable for the correlation between any two variables. On the other hand, as McNemar points out,[1] when errors are correlated an obtained reliability coefficient may be spuriously high. It seemed highly unlikely that this had any bearing on our data, and we assumed that the obtained reliability coefficients were not so affected.

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[1] McNemar, Q., op. cit., p. 147

The Intercorrelation of Factor Scores

Table 5-6

Intercorrelation of Factor Scores

	Factor I	Factor II	Factor III
Factor I	----	-.49	.16
Factor II		----	-.46
Factor III			----

In Table 5-6 we noted that the two highest correlations were $r_{I,II}$ and $r_{II,III}$. It must be remembered that our analytic method was biased to minimize the correlation between factor scores since a cluster was allowed to appear on only one factor, the one on which it had the highest loading. We could therefore interpret the two correlations of -.49 and -.46 as relatively high. However, we also noted that the reliability coefficients of factor scores I and II were high and therefore the correlations of these factor scores were not seriously reduced by unreliability. If we had been dealing with much unreliability we might have been able to speculate that the true correlation was even higher than that shown in Table 5-6. It seemed more likely that this affected $r_{I,III}$ and $r_{II,III}$ because of the greater unreliability of factor score III.

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[1] McNemar, Q., op. cit., p. 149.

The variance shared in common by Factors I and II was 24%, for Factor I and III it was 3%, and for Factors II and III it was 21%. Obversely, this meant that 76%, 97%, and 79% of the variance respectively was specific to each. However, some portion of these latter percentages were due to the measurement error variance of each factor and therefore not available (unless the errors were correlated) for correlation.

We therefore became interested in what the intercorrelations of our factor scores would have been if perfect errorless measures had been available. That is, what the correlations would have been if we had used true or domain factor scores.

Table 5-7

Intercorrelations of Factor Scores Corrected for Attenuation*

	Factor I	Factor II	Factor III
Factor I	----	-.54	.20
Factor II		----	-.58
Factor III			----

*The formula we utilized was as follows:[1]

$$r_{tt} = \frac{r_{xy}}{\sqrt{r_{xx}}\ \sqrt{r_{yy}}}$$

r_{xy} = the intercorrelation of variables x and y
r_{xx} = the reliability coefficient of variable x
r_{yy} = the reliability coefficient of variable y

When we compared Tables 5-6 and 5-7, all intercorrelations were higher because of the elimination of measurement error, since we were now measuring the proportion of shared variance that was available for correlation. It was of interest to note that the corrected $r_{I,II}$ was not as high as the corrected $r_{II,III}$. This was due to the higher reliability of factor scores I and II.

A correlation corrected for attenuation is, of course, theoretical. It is of interest in looking at the relationship among theoretical constructs. For instance, we could see from Table 5-7 that construc II was fairly equally related to constructs III and I, and by squaring th corrected coefficients we could arrive at the proportion of true variance shared by each pair of factors.

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[1] McNemar, Q., op. cit., p. 153.

The Intercorrelation of Factor Scores and Worker Impressions

Table 5-8

The Relationship of Factor Scores to Caseworkers' General Impression of Couples as Prospects for Adoptive Parenthood

	Impression of Couples
Factor Score I	.46
Factor Score II	.17
Factor Score III	-.04

In interpreting all of this material the reader must remember, as mentioned earlier, that since factors are polar they can be looked at and interpreted from either end of a continuum. For the sake of simplicity, our focus in what follows below will be on one end of the spectrum.

When we simultaneously looked at the results of Tables 5-6, 5-7, and 5-8 we could arrive at some interesting formulations. Factor scores II and III were negatively correlated with each other. In other words, the assessment of suitability for a deviant child was associated with couples who were married longer, who were older, and who were seen over an extended number of interviews. Also, the suitability factor was positively associated, although at a low level, with the workers' overall assessments, whereas the young marriage factor showed no relationship to such assessments. When we considered all of these associations from the standpoint of the practice scene, it appeared that caseworkers did not associate youth with suitability for children who deviate in some way. Alternatively, it was possible that such young marrieds were more likely to prefer a "normal" child and the workers were responding to such a preference. Despite such judgments of unsuitability for a specific group of children, there was no association between factor score III and the workers' overall impression of couples as prospects for adoptive parenthood in general. At the other pole of the relationship between factor scores II and III we noted that assessed suitability for children who deviate was associated with age and longer agency contacts. The latter made considerable sense with respect to practice, for agencies have for some time stressed the need for couples who might be suitable prospects for the so-called hard-to-place child, and therefore may have been willing to invest more time with couples who were prospects for such children. In line with this there seemed to be a tendency to give a more positive rating to these couples.

Factor scores I and III were weakly related. We therefore tentatively conjectured about the reasons why there was some association between young married couples or few interviews and a positive psychosocial appraisal. We suspected that this correlation was partly influenced by the reapplicants in our sample who were screened quickly and had a sizeable percent of positive assessments. On the other hand, a large number of the early screened couples were among the rejected group of applicants, hence the negative correlation with overall impression, although we must again stress that the correlation here was too small for a meaningful interpretation.

Of particular interest to us was the relationship of factor score I and II. Here positive psychosocial appraisal had a fairly sizeable negative association with an assessment of suitability for the deviant child. Both factor scores, however, were positively correlated with our criterion variable, the overall impression of a couple as prospects for adoptive parenthood.

In the first instance we noted that there were clearly two separate conceptual dimensions operating in the assessment of adoptive applicants: 1) an overall psychosocial appraisal and 2) an estimate of suitability for a child who deviated in some way from the so-called normal youngster. Yet the negative correlation between these two dimensions made it clear that a positive rating on the first was associated with a negative association on the second, and vice versa. In other words, at the positive pole couples who were globally assessed in a positive way were rated poorly in relation to their suitability as adoptive prospects for a deviant child. However, both dimensions were positively correlated with the adoption worker's general impression of the couple as prospects for adoptive parenthood. Our interpretation therefore was that a good impression may be associated with an assessed "good couple" (factor score I) or a "suitable couple" (factor score II), but a simultaneous positive assessment on both was not likely. We also noted that an overall positive appraisal (factor score I) had a considerably more important association (r = .46) with a worker's good impression than was assessed suitability for a deviant child (r = .17). We therefore concluded that there seemed to be two alternative non-simultaneous routes that led to a good impression of a couple's prospects for adoptive parenthood, a global positive assessment and suitability for a child who differed in some way from the norm, and that these routes signified two major conceptual dimensions that were operative in social workers' assessments of adoptive applicants.

We will defer further discussion of this fascinating material and its implications until the final chapter.

The Clusters and Worker Impression

In addition to analyzing the overall relationship of the factor scores and our criterion variable, the worker's general impression of the couple as prospects for adoptive parenthood, we were also interested in focusing more specifically on the relationship of worker impression and the clusters that emerged from the first-order factor analyses. We therefore correlated the impression variable with all the cluster scores we had obtained. The results are presented in Table 5-9.

Table 5-9

The Relationship of First-Order Clusters to Adoption Workers' General Impression of Couples as Prospects for Adoptive Parenthood*

Cluster Number	General Impression	Cluster Interpretation
31	.60	Couple rated as open and candid
12	.55	Couple rated as empathic with respect to unmarried motherhood
27	.45	Couple rated as having a positive quality of marital interaction
26	.45	Wife's personality described as positive and outgoing
41	-.43	Couple rated as exhibiting negative attitude toward adoption agencies
25	.39	Husband's personality described as positive and outgoing
1	.38	Rating of couple's acceptance of infertility status
36	.35	Couple rated as suitable for mild-moderately deviant child
40	-.35	Couple rated as exhibiting guarded, nonspontaneous interview behavior
16	.34	Couple rated as having non-neurotic motivation for adoption
35	.32	Wife rated as not exhibiting an overprotective attitude toward children
2	.30	Couple's rated high socio-economic status

*Only correlations of .30 or above are presented here.

We quickly noted, with no great surprise, that the majority of the items were components of Factor I. However, the order of their importance varied. The most sizeable association with worker impression (r = .60) was worker assessment of the couple as open and candid. The ratings included in this cluster referred mainly to the ease with which the couples were able to reveal and communicate material about themselves in the interview situation as well as their openness with each other in their marital relationship, particularly with reference to any differences or arguments between them. The next largest association (r = .55) with the impression rating related to the couple's attitude, their ability to empathize with and their thoughtfulness about the problems faced by unmarried mothers. The couple's comfort about revelation of the child's adoptive status was also included in this cluster. Third, the worker's general impression was associated with a positive rating of the couple's marital interaction, the degree to which they seemed able to display warmth and affection and generally could communicate their feelings toward each other. Next in the hierarchy of associations with worker impression (r = .45) was the rating of the wife's personality as positive, outgoing, and responsive.

We noted that the four highest associations seemed to share a common link, the couple's openness and communicativeness, and wondered whether it was this quality (at least in part) which has often been designated as "warmth" by adoption workers when asked what they considered of great import in assessing couples for adoption. On the other hand, we were somewhat surprised that the rating on non-neurotic, or positive, motivation for adoption had a fairly low standing in this hierarchy of associations with worker impression, since the practice field has placed considerable stress on the quality of motivation in assessing prospective adoptive couples.

The low positive association between worker impression and assessed suitability for the mild-moderately deviant child was in line with our analysis in the previous section of this report. In other words, although underlying conceptual dimensions used by adoption workers separated suitability ratings (factor score II) from a general positive appraisal (factor score I) there was a positive association of both of these with impression of the couple.

Although the correlations in Table 5-9 gave us some idea of the more important ingredients in the staffs' ratings of couples as prospects for adoptive parenthood, we want to disclaim any inference about causality or directionality. For example, with respect to the most highly correlated cluster, we could not say that a high rating on "openness" caused a high rating on impression, or that a good impression was causally related to a high rating on "openness." That is, we have here been talking about the association of variables, about variation shared in common between the scores on a cluster and the adoption workers' impression of applicant couples.

Some Husband-Wife Differences in Relation to Worker Impression

We carried our analysis of the criterion variable, worker impression, one step further in order to see whether the correlation between the impression of the couple and a few variables that seemed closely related to motivation for adoption differed substantially between the way in which husbands and wives were assessed. In other words, given a particular variable, were the workers' ratings of wives more strongly related to the overall impression of the applicants as prospects for adoptive parenthood than the workers' ratings of the husbands.

Because of limitations on time we chose three variables where there were some differences between husband and wife correlations with the overall impression criterion. All three variables seemed to us major questions related to motivation for adoption. Since we were dealing here with correlation coefficients that were not independent, the test of significance used was one developed by Hotteling.[1] The three hypotheses tested were that there was no significant difference in 1) how husbands' and wives' assessed positive motivation for adoption (based on an intrinsic liking for children) related to the criterion impression of the couple; 2) how husbands' and wives' assessed interest in adoption related to the criterion impression of the couple; and 3) how husbands' and wives' assessed degree of confidence about their

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[1] Edwards, A. L., *Experimental Design in Psychological Research*, Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1964, p. 85.

The formula used was as follows:

$$t = (r_1 - r_2)\sqrt{\frac{(n - 3)(1 + r_{12})}{2(1 - r_1^2 - r_2^2 - r_{12}^2 + 2r_1r_2r_{12})}}$$

capacity to take on adoptive parenthood related to the criterion impression of the couple.

The first hypothesis yielded no significant result; however, hypotheses 2 and 3 showed differences between husbands and wives that were significant ($P < .01$). This was of particular interest to us since in each instance the correlation between the variable and the impression was higher for husbands than for wives. In other words, there was, for one, a stronger association between the rating of the husbands' interest in adoption and the workers' impression of the couple than a similar rating for wives. In like manner the husbands' confidence about the capacity to assume the adoptive parent role was more highly correlated with the workers' general impression of the couple than was such a confidence rating for wives.

Although again no causal relationship can be inferred, it is of interest that the husband ratings figure more strongly than do those for wives when related to the overall impression of couples as prospects for adoptive parenthood.

A Multiple Regression Analysis of the Factor Scores

The two main uses for the technique of multiple correlation have been 1) to provide an optimum weighting for combining a number of variables in predicting a criterion and 2) to make possible the analyzing of the variance of a particular variable into component parts. Operationally in this research our focus was not on prediction. Our interest, rather, was in using multiple regression for analytic purposes, in order to examine the unique contribution of each of the conceptual dimensions (the factors) in predicting our criterion variable, worker impression of couple as prospects for adoptive parenthood.

It should be noted that although in what follows we are not implying cause or direction in time, we will be using words like "predictor", "criterion", and "dependent variable" as these are the conventional terms in which multiple regression results have usually been described. Undoubtedly some causal chain does operate with respect to an adoption worker's overall impression of a couple since certain variables are, for a given worker, more related to that worker's impression than others. On the other hand, looking at it from the opposite direction, there are probably biases with respect to general impression that affect a worker's judgment of specific variables. Such considerations would have been of particular importance had our interest been in dealing with causal relationships. Instead, our emphasis in this analysis was on the relative relationship of the three factor scores to the general impression criterion variable.

For ease of presentation, let us assume that we have a dependent variable (worker impression of couple as prospects for adoptive parenthood) and three independent variables (the three factor scores) that can be thought of in terms of their contribution to the variation in the dependent variable. The complete multiple regression analysis completed on our data yielded a multiple regression correlation coefficient $R = .65$.

This reported R was corrected for shrinkage[1] and was therefore considered an unbiased estimate of the population value. In other words 42% (R^2) of the variance in the overall impression criterion was attributable to variation in the three factor scores.

The question arose as to the relative importance of each of the three factor scores to the variation in the criterion impression. The problem here was of weights to be assigned to the three factor scores. The β coefficients yielded by the multiple regression analysis for factor scores I and II were 16.5 and 11.9 respectively ($P < .01$), and for factor score III it was 2.5 ($P < .05$). Therefore in all three instances we could reject the null hypothesis that in the population from which this sample was drawn the Beta weight of each factor score was zero.

Since β coefficients are not necessarily comparable because they may involve diverse measurement units, they were standardized and are presented in this form in Table 5-10.

The last column in Table 5-10 is of particular importance in that it yielded the proportion that each factor score contributed uniquely to R^2. In other words, given that 42% of the variance in the criterion impression was attributable to the variation in the three factor scores,

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[1] **McNemar, Q., op. cit., pp. 184-5.**

Table 5-10

The Relationship Between Standardized Beta Coefficients and the Correlation of Impression with the Three Factor Scores

Factor Scores	Standardized β Coefficient	Correlation of Criterion Impression and the Three Factor Scores	Proportion of R^2 $(\beta_i r_{ci})$
Factor Score I	.726	.456	(.726)(.456)=.33
Factor Score II	.581	.172	(.581)(.172)=.10
Factor Score III	.108	-.037	(.108)(-.037)=-.00

factor score I accounted for 33% and factor score II contributed 10% of such variance. The negligible contribution of factor score III was negative for algebraic reasons since the sums of proportions had to equal R^2. We could conclude from these data that factor score I was three times as important as factor score II in predicting the general impression of couples as prospects for adoptive parenthood.

Once more, however, we underscore the fact that the computations that resulted from our multiple regression analysis again pointed to two distinct routes (factor scores I and II) by means of which adoptive applicants were assessed positively as prospects for adoptive parenthood. These two means accounted for 42% (R^2) of the variance in the overall impression criterion.

A Multiple Discriminant Analysis of the Factor Scores

Multiple discriminant analysis sets itself the task of optimally discriminating among groups by determining that set of weights which, when used to form score composites, results in maximum discrimination among the groups (agencies). The questions for which we sought answers were, for instance, 1) did agencies differ with respect to their assessments of adoptive applicants, 2) which of the factors, when considered jointly, discriminated most among the eight agencies, and 3) which agencies were similar to each other in their assessments (in terms of mean factor scores) of adoptive applicants?

First of all we noted that when all the agencies' standardized factor score means were jointly considered the agencies differed significantly ($P < .01$) among themselves in their ratings of adoptive applicants ($F_{21/1115} = 70$). When the factor score means were considered separately, the primary contribution to this differentiation among the agencies came from Factor II ($F_{7/388} = 161$), and secondarily from Factor I ($F_{7/388} = 41$), and the least from Factor III ($F_{7/388} = 6.9$). Although all of these results were significant ($P < .01$) we could readily see that Factor II contributed most to the spread of the standardized mean factor scores among the eight agencies, whereas Factor III's contribution was negligible.

Our examination of the separate means on factor scores I and II for the eight agencies yielded the following results. For the items that comprised Factor I (Positive Psychosocial Appraisal) agencies 3, 1, and 2 (in that order) gave on the average the highest positive ratings, agencies 6, 5, 8, and 7 gave the poorest ratings, and agency 4 was located in the middle. Conversely on Factor II (Suitability for a Deviant

Child) agencies 7, 8, 5, and 6 (in that order) gave, on the average, more positive ratings, agencies 2, 1, and 3 gave the lowest assessments of their applicants, and again agency 4 was in the middle, although closer to the latter three agencies than to the first group.

In Table 5-10 we present the results of a distance analysis for the agencies in a three dimensional space. Each agency's position in the 3-space was here determined by using as coefficients the means of that agency's standardized scores on the three factors. The results reported are the squared distances between each pair of agencies. Although the table is symmetrical about its leading diagonal, we present the table as a whole for ease of visual inspection.

Table 5-11

Squared Distances for Each Pair of Agencies with Mean Factor Scores Combined

	Agency							
Agency	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1	---	1.2	1.0	6.0	31.8	31.4	34.2	32.4
2	1.2	---	4.2	4.3	27.6	27.0	30.0	28.3
3	1.0	4.2	---	7.3	32.2	31.8	34.5	32.7
4	6.0	4.3	7.3	---	10.3	10.0	12.1	10.9
5	31.8	27.6	32.2	10.3	---	0.1	0.9	0.6
6	31.4	27.0	31.8	10.0	0.1	---	1.4	1.0
7	34.2	30.0	34.5	12.1	0.9	1.4	---	0.0
8	32.4	28.3	32.7	10.9	0.6	1.0	0.0	---

It could readily be seen from these figures that agencies 1, 2, 3, and 4 tended to be close to each other, and distant from the combined mean scores of agencies 5, 6, 7, and 8, which appeared, in turn, as neighboring points. In other words, the eight agencies could be separated into two distinct groupings, with one set having relatively low mean factor scores on the Factor I items and high mean scores on the Factor II items, while the other group of agencies had mean factor scores that reversed this process in their assessments of applicant couples. Our focus on the two sets of agencies here was primarily on mean factor scores I and II because the effect of the factor III mean scores was negligible and did not readily differentiate among the eight agencies.

We want to underscore that we were here dealing with questionnaire factor mean scores and not the mean scores on the criterion overall impression. For instance, the workers in a given agency might, on the average, have tended to appraise couples more conservatively on the items that comprised factor score I, yet in their criterion impression rating were more liberal in giving a positive rating Therefore we could not say that the four agencies that tended to give lower ratings on the mean factor scores also necessarily gave lower criterion impression ratings. Obviously this did occur to the extent that the relationship between factor score I and overall impression yielded a positive correlation.

Of major interest here was the emergence of two distinct groups of agencies with divergent assessment tendencies. The four agencies which, on the average, had lower mean scores on the items of Factor I and higher mean scores on the suitability Factor were all private agencies. On the other hand two public agencies and one private one tended on the average to give higher ratings on "Positive Psychosocial Appraisal", while one public agency held the middle position. All three public agencies and the one private agency tended to give poorer ratings on the "Suitability for a Deviant Child" Factor. Thus all but one private agency appeared to have different rating tendencies than the public agencies. The one private agency that emerged as similar to the assessment tendencies of the workers in the public agencies was an agency with a large reapplicant group which probably accounts for their more positive assessments. At the same time this agency tended to give couples, on the average, lower ratings on the "Suitability" Factor. This pointed to the possibility that when couples already have at least one adopted child in their home, although they are assessed favorably, they will be less likely to be considered suitable for a child who deviates in some way. We offer this provisionally as we did not have information of this sort for all agencies. But the relationship did appear certain for the one private agency above, even if our explanation was tentative, at best.

Summary

In this chapter we have examined the underlying organization of the caseworkers' ratings of adoptive applicants using a factor analytic approach. We have presented the reliability of the three factor scores

which emerged, their intercorrelation, as well as their correlation with the criterion variable, the caseworkers' general impression of couples as prospects for adoptive parenthood. We have also looked at those clusters that were most strongly associated with our major dependent variable and focused on a few husband and wife variables that differed with respect to the criterion. We reported the results of a multiple regression analysis of the factor scores in order to analyze their relative relationship to the general impression criterion. Finally, we presented the results of a multiple discriminant analysis of the factor scores, using the eight agencies as the grouping variable, in order to gain some notion about similarities and differences among agencies in their assessments of adoptive applicants.

CHAPTER VI

SOME ASPECTS OF CHILD PLACEMENT AND OF THE CHILDREN PLACED

A question often posed both by the adoption field and the community at large is how much time elapses between a couple's initial contact with an adoption agency and the placement of a child. We addressed ourselves to this issue by focusing on that sub-sample of couples who were initial applicants, who were accepted by each agency for placement, and examined the length of time between the initial interview and the date a child was placed in the home. We excluded all accepted reapplicant couples from this analysis as the home study period was, in most instances, shorter than in the case of initial applicants, and therefore would have skewed the figures in the direction of the lower end of the time range. The results appear in Table 6-1.

For the group as a whole the median length of time between initial interview and date of child placement was 7.9 months. But as can be seen in Table 6-2, there was considerable variation among the agencies as to length of time prior to placement. The three public agencies were at the upper end of the range, in addition to one private agency which had an administrative policy of several months wait between a couple's initial interview and the continuation of the home study. It was unclear to us why the public agencies generally

Table 6-1

The Length of Time Between First Interview and Placement of Child Among Accepted Initial Applicants in Eight Adoption Agencies*

(Percent of Total)

Length of Time Until Placement	Agency								
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	Total
Less than 3 months	--	--	38	11	15	--	--	4	7
3-6 months	7	39	38	28	36	24	31	--	23
6-9 months	41	25	23	28	36	47	31	12	31
9-12 months	30	21	--	18	1	24	16	39	21
12-15 months	14	14	--	11	1	--	8	22	10
15-18 months	7	--	--	--	--	6	--	12	4
Over 18 months	--	--	--	5	--	--	12	12	4
Total	99	99	99	101	99	101	98	101	100
(N)	(27)	(16)	(13)	(18)	(22)	(17)	(26)	(23)	(162)

*In four instances the child had not been placed at the conclusion of our data collection, and these are therefore excluded for lack of information.

took longer in the study and placing process. We speculated whether this was possibly due to staff size, but rejected that notion since these agencies did not on the whole comprise the smallest staffs in our sample. However, it was possible that the staffs' caseloads were heavier, or that there were more administrative details, each of which might have prolonged the study and placement time. We could not say anything definitive about this as we did not have the information available.

Table 6-2

Median Length of Time (in Months) Between First Interview and Placement of Child Among Accepted Initial Applicants in the Eight Agencies

	Agency							
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Median Time in Months:	9.2	7.3	3.9	7.2	5.9	4.7	4.7	10.8

We noted that in Hylton's study[1] on adoption trends, based on information from a national sample, the median length of time for the adoption process in 1962 was shorter for public than voluntary agencies. This may have been due to a difference in the way the time period was measured (in that study agencies were asked to give their own estimates of the time involved whereas we kept a case-by-case record), or a difference in the definition of what was meant by an application. On the other hand it may have reflected a regional difference, with the agencies in our sample deviating from the national picture since they were only representative of urban programs in one major eastern metropolitan area.

When we examined the ages of children placed with all the accepted couples in our sample (Tables 6-3 and 6-4) we again noted a considerable spread among the agencies. The median age for the

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[1] Hylton, Lydia F., "Trends in Adoption, 1958-1962," Child Welfare, Vol. XLIV, No. 7, July 1965, pp. 377-386.

Table 6-3

The Age of Child at Placement in the Eight Agencies*
(Percent of Total)

Age of Child	Agency 1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	Total
Under 3 months	--	28	56	6	24	64	36	3	27
3-6 months	30	39	29	50	59	14	29	64	40
6-12 months	53	28	12	28	14	18	14	21	23
12-18 months	3	--	--	11	--	--	11	6	4
18-24 months	7	6	3	--	--	--	--	--	2
2-3 years	3	--	--	6	3	--	7	3	3
3-4 years	--	--	--	--	--	--	4	3	1
4-5 years	3	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	0
Over 5 years	--	--	--	--	--	4	--	--	0
Total	99	101	100	101	100	100	101	100	100
(N)	(30)	(18)	(34)	(18)	(29)	(22)	(28)	(33)	(212)

*Although a total of 217 couples were accepted by the eight agencies, a total of 218 children were placed because in one instance two children went to one family. As noted in the footnote to Table 6-1, at the conclusion of data collection we did not have complete information on four of the children placed. In addition there were a few instances in which a worker did not have some information on a child. The total N of children placed therefore varies from 212 to 214 (except in one instance where the N = 200) because we excluded the "Don't Know" category from the presentation. For complete accuracy, our report should read "of the children placed on whom there was information" but for purposes of brevity our reference will be to "of the children placed."

Table 6-4

Median Age of Children at Time of Placement in the Eight Agencies

	Agency 1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Median Age in Months:	8. 2	4. 7	Under 3	5. 7	4. 3	Under 3	4. 5	5. 2

total sample was 4.7 months, with the public agencies tending to be above and private agencies below this point. Only 10 percent of the sample of children placed were one year or older, whereas the majority (67 percent) were under six months of age. On the one hand these data concerned us because of the small number of placements among children who were somewhat older. On the other hand we were encouraged by the progress among agencies in placing children at an early age. Two agencies in particular (3 and 6) tended to place infants soon after birth, and agencies 3, 5, and 6 placed the largest proportion of children who were less than six months old. We wondered whether this was due to the particular group of children that they happened to have available or whether it reflected these agencies' attempts to place children at as early an age as possible.

Table 6-5

The Relationship Between Initial Applications and Reapplications to the Age of the Child at Time of Placement with Accepted Couples
(Percent of Total)

Age of Child	Initial Application	Reapplication
Under 3 months	25	43
3-6 months	39	37
6-12 months	23	17
12-18 months	4	2
18-24 months	2	2
2-3 years	4	--
3-4 years	1	--
4-5 years	1	--
Over 5 years	1	--
Total	100	101
(N)	(158)	(54)

We were also interested in whether there were any differences in the ages of children placed with initial applicant and reapplicant couples. We wondered whether reapplicants, since they already had, in most instances, at least one adopted child in the home, might be thought of as candidates for a somewhat older, and therefore more difficult to place child. We did not find this to be true. Eighty percent of the children placed with reapplicants were under six months of age as opposed to 64 percent of the children placed with initial applicant couples, with the median age in the reapplicant group at 3.6 months, while the median age of children placed with initial applicants was 4.9 months. Children in the older age groups were for the most part placed in the initial applicant group. We conjectured whether this meant that agencies gave considerable attention to the relationship between the age of a new child and that of children already in the home and therefore tended to place a younger child with a couple who already had at least one other child. An alternative possibility was that agencies regarded the care of a young baby as more risky and therefore were more apt to place such a child in surer hands, that is, in homes where couples were more experienced. On the other hand, our finding may have been due to the agencies' response to reapplicants' requests with respect to the age of the child desired. This, however, did not seem like a ready explanation for the differential between initial and reapplicant couples unless we also assumed that more initial applicants requested older children, whether by preference or because they felt that they would not have been accepted except for their ability or stated readiness to adopt a somewhat older child.

When we examine the total number of boarding home placements we enthusiastically noted that among 212 placed children the vast majority (91 percent) had had only one such placement.. One percent had had none, six percent had two and one percent had three such placements. In other words, very few children were placed into adoptive homes directly from the hospital where they were born. It could not even be assumed that the one percent who had no boarding home placement went directly into adoptive homes, as some of this group may have instead had some kind of institutional placement. We noted that five percent of the total group had had one and one percent had two institutional placements, while the remainder had never been in an institution beyond the initial hospitalization.

Of the children placed with the accepted applicants, 49 percent were males and 51 percent females. Unfortunately we did not have information about the relationship between this sex ratio and the accepted couples' own requests with respect to the sex of the child.

The nationality of descent of the children's natural parents was largely (56 percent) a combination of several nationalities, with the natural mother and putative father of diverse origins. Thirteen percent were of North American origin, eleven percent from the British Isles, and small percentages scattered among other backgrounds.

The racial backgrounds of the childrens' natural parents is presented in Table 6-6.

Table 6-6

Racial Background of Natural Parents of Children Placed with Accepted Couples

Race of Natural Parents	Percent of Total
Both White	87
Both Negro	7
Both Chinese	1
Mixed: Negro-White	2
Mixed: White-Unknown	1
Unknown: Negro heritage	1
Mixed: White and part American Indian or all American Indian	1
Total	100
(N)	(214)

We noted here that the majority of children came from white parentage. The seven percent from all Negro backgrounds represented 16 children who were all placed in Negro homes. Ten children stemmed from mixed backgrounds. Of these, four were placed with Negro couples, two with white couples, and three went into homes that were mixed.

The agencies participating in this research were all required, by law, to consider an out-of-wedlock child as taking on the religion of its natural mother (regardless of the religion of the child's putative father). Exceptions to this occurred in instances of a married couple releasing a child for adoption, in which case they decided on the religion in which they wanted the child reared, and where a natural mother with an out-of-wedlock child requested that the child be reared in a religious denomination other than her own. However, since the incidence of these examples has ordinarily been comparatively rare, and since we did not obtain this type of information about the children placed with the adoptive couples in our sample, our tabulations were in terms of the religious denomination of the natural mother.

Table 6-7

Religious Denomination of the Natural Mother of Children Placed with the Accepted Couples

Religious Denomination	Percent of Total
Catholic	46
Jewish	13
Protestant	37
Greek Orthodox	1
Other	2
Total	99
(N)	(217)

The figures in Table 6-7 are self-explanatory except for the "Other" category, which included a few instances where the natural mother's religion was unknown (we did not have the information at the close of data collection), or was listed as "mixed" or "none." In the two latter instances there must have been some designation of religion although we did not know what this was. We were also aware that the major religious categories included foundlings, who were assigned to various agencies following a religious designation by a public agency. Protestant natural mothers represented the largest proportion in four of our agencies, Catholics in three, and Jewish mothers were in the majority in one agency. When we looked at the relationship between natural parent denomination and the religion of adoptive couples, we noted only a very small proportion where agencies had taken the step of a cross-over between religious denominations. We did not have exact figures here because we did not know in which instances the natural mother had requested a placement in a home whose religion was other than her own, rather than this having been the agency's decision. We gathered from the field that such cross-over occurs primarily among interracial children. Since this group represented only three percent of our total sample it was not surprising that we saw such a small proportion of placements across religious lines.

One of the questions we asked the adoption workers was whether, in their estimation, the child placed with the particular adoptive couple they had interviewed deviated in some way from the so-called normal youngster, and asked them to specify the nature of the deviation. Of the 214 responses, 87 percent indicated no deviation. Eleven percent of the children were considered to deviate on psychological grounds, health factors, some minor skin defect, or a combination of these. In one percent of the cases intellectual factors were mentioned, and another one percent of the children were considered to deviate on the basis of dark skin color.

In summary, the child placed with the X family was, on the average, likely to be a white infant, whose natural mother's religion was the same as the denomination of the X family. Prior to placement with the adoptive couple, baby X had been in one boarding home following the initial hospitalization. At the time of the adoptive placement baby X was about four and one-half months of age, and was estimated to be a normal healthy youngster who did not deviate in any unusual way with respect to health or psychological factors, coloration, and so forth.

Summary

In this chapter we focused on various aspects of child placement, such as the length of time between a couple's initial contact with an agency and the placement of a child. We also scrutinized some characteristics of the children, such as their age at the time of placement with initial and reapplicant couples, the number of boarding home placements prior to placement, their sex, nationality of descent, racial background, religious denomination, and assessed deviations from the so-called normal youngster.

CHAPTER VII

CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

At this summary stage of research endeavor, the investigator (and possibly the reader) felt both sated and out of breath. On the one hand there was the inclination to stand in awe of the sheer quantity of data presented, along with a general sense of excitement about the richness of some of the material. This was offset by a feeling of humility in the face of the gaps in, and limitations of, this investigation. Whenever we arrived at the answer to some question it stimulated a number of related queries for which we had no data. Such frustrations were tempered by a quiet reminder about the exploratory nature of this study, and the fact that we were neither seeking to nor establishing firm truths but rather hoping that our efforts would stimulate thought, discussion, and further research within the field of child adoption.

We approached the task of summation cognizant of the fact that adoption agencies have been the target of various kinds of criticism, some valid and some not. It was our earnest hope that the data would not be used out of context in order to provide fodder for those with private scores to settle. At the same time, research ethics required the presentation of our findings, whatever they were, and that the adoption field not be spared fair criticism where it was due. Within this context we could but commend the adoption agencies and caseworkers who participated in this endeavor for their sincere efforts, willingness, and courage in responding to the challenge of looking at their own practices in the difficult task of selecting adoptive applicants.

Our approach in this research was practice-oriented. That is, we endeavored to look at adoption practice in its day-to-day operations. We were excited about the size of our sample, eight agencies and 398 applicant couples, for this made us fairly secure about its representativeness with respect to this eastern metropolitan area, even if we were in no position to generalize about the practice prevailing in other geographic areas. A concern for an adequate description of practice influenced the choice of content for the questionnaires, the selection of our sample, and the manner in which the information was gathered. We made many compromises in selecting our research design and procedures. For instance, we did not devote ourselves to the task of establishing the reliability of caseworker assessments of applicant couples, the object of experimental simulation studies by Brieland[1] with respect to adoption workers and of Wolins[2] in relation to staff in the field of foster care. Rather, we were inclined to accept the fact that judgments in the adoption field tended to be rendered with considerable uncertainty and that the task of assessing applicants did not always stem from a firm knowledge base. Nevertheless, that is how the field has often had to operate and we wished to lend our effort to building this base by explicating whatever regularities we could find to account for caseworkers' judgments of adoptive applicants.

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[1] Brieland, D., An Experimental Study of the Selection of Adoptive Parents at Intake, New York: Child Welfare League of America, May, 1959.

[2] Wolins, M., Selecting Foster Parents, New York: Columbia University Press, 1963, pp. 71-74.

As mentioned earlier, the wealth of data accumulated was a bit staggering. Therefore in what follows we will focus only on some selected findings that seemed of particular interest.

In thinking back over the task of carrying out this research, which involved fairly regular contacts with the adoption workers who were assigned to the applicants in our sample, we were struck by two parallel, though somewhat conflicting, impressions. On the one hand, we felt the seriousness with which the caseworkers regarded their responsibility in the applicant selection process and the depth of their respect for the couples involved. At the same time, many of the workers held a strong allegiance toward their own agency, yet seemed somewhat isolated from the thinking and work of other agencies in the field. The investigator all too often was placed in the position of channeler of information with requests for news from the field, and questions about policies and practices of other agencies in this metropolitan area. Although this was strictly an impressionistic observation, we did begin to wonder about gaps in communication among the staffs of agencies, and about the lack of collaborative relationships in the face of a joint task to be done. We therefore hoped that some of our findings would not only add to general knowledge, but would serve as a stimulus for better communication among the caseworkers in the field.

The Adoption Agencies and Their Applicants

The majority of couples who were interviewed in the eight agencies were seen by one caseworker during the course of their adoption study, although in two of the agencies there was a shift between two or three workers for about 50 percent of the couples in their respective samples. It appeared therefore that the agencies tended to hold to some notion of continuity in the study process, a principle that has been stressed in the whole casework field.

The median number of interviews per couple was four, with most initial applicants completing the study process in four to five interviews, while the majority of reapplications were completed in three or fewer interviews. We noted this with much interest in view of the frequent complaint by some members in the general community that applying for adoption at an agency is equivalent to being compelled to submit to interviews ad nauseum. Although we could sympathize with those couples who found the interviewing process a strai this particular complaint seemed to have little merit in light of our findings.

We also noted that the majority of agency interview time was devoted to initial applicants, because these comprised the larger group (there were about five to seven initial applicants per each reapplicant couple) and because they were seen for more interviews in the study process. We also found few families who had had previous private adoption contacts of any sort in the total sample. We wondere whether this was due to some reporting error or whether it meant that agency and private applicants stem from different populations or travel diverse routes in their quest for a child. The latter notion gained some support from our data on referral sources, which pointed in the direction of some informal acquaintance system as operative in couples' applying to a particular adoption agency.

With respect to more descriptive material about the applicants in our sample, we noted that the ages of applicants accepted by the eight agencies ranged from about 20 to 50 years. Although the majority of acceptable couples fell at some point between these extremes, our data did support the notion of flexibility among agencies with respect to age, and negated the idea of rigidity of policy and practice in this area.

We were somewhat startled by our finding that with respect to race, the proportion of accepted Negro couples was smaller than the percentage among the white group who were accepted by the agencies. At the same time the proportion of Negroes who withdrew, yet were judged good prospects for adoptive parenthood, outweighed the proportion of white couples in the same category. These data were troubling in view of the large number of Negro children awaiting adoptive placement, some agencies' outspoken concern about such children, and the need for recruitment of Negro applicants. With more flexible agency criteria for selection, especially among this group, we would have expected to find a larger proportion of acceptances here than among the white couples. Indeed, of equal concern was the sizeable withdrawal rate among good Negro adoptive prospects. Although our present analysis did not explore the reasons for these withdrawals, we had to question whether such withdrawals might not have been averted if some agency standards or practices were altered in order to establish the best possible communication with the Negro applicant group.

We were also extremely interested and surprised to find that among the three major religious denominations there was little variation in the proportion of all couples who were either accepted by these agencies or judged to be good prospects for adoptive parenthood, although they withdrew. In other words, couples who had at least one interview had about an equal chance of being selected or positively regarded, irrespective of their religion. This seemed to contradict the notion that Jewish couples have had a more difficult time in the selection process. On the basis of our data we could only conclude that this idea was either incorrect, or that it was correct to the extent that the Jewish group did not have as many adoption resources at their disposal because of the relative dearth of available Jewish children, or that for the Jewish group there existed a more stringent self-selection and/or screening process prior to the first interview. Our findings clearly indicated that once seen for an interview, none of the applicants identified with the three major religious denominations was in a disadvantageous position as far as acceptance for adoptive parenthood. The commonly expressed idea that couples of mixed denominations are not acceptable was also not supported by our data, although it was true that this group was required to make a commitment about the religious denomination in which they planned to rear a child, and there was indication of a somewhat higher rejection rate here than among couples belonging to one of the three major denominations.

With respect to education, the sample median for husbands was "college, not completed" and for wives it was the "high school graduate" level, with an overall tendency for applicants to the public agency adoption departments to have attained a lower educational level than private agency applicants. The acceptance rates bulged at two peaks, the "high school graduate" and the graduate training levels, which we tentatively interpreted as reflecting the public-private educational differentials. Despite such possible differences, the husbands' median total gross income of about $8,600 remained approximately the same for all the agencies, although a larger proportion of private agency applicants were in the upper end of the income range than was true of applicants to public agencies. With respect to husbands' occupational prestige ratings, agency differences were not considered material, and the only differential noted in relation to agency outcome was in the lowest and middle prestige categories where rejection and withdrawal rates of couples who were considered poor prospects for adoptive parenthood tended to be higher.

For most of the couples in our sample, their current marriage was the first, with the median length of marriage somewhat over seven and one-half years. Couples who were married less than four or over 16 years had a poorer chance of being accepted, but we suspected that this may have had as much to do with their age as with the agencies' standards pertaining to length of marriage, since the proportion of accepted and withdrawn (but assessed as good) couples at either extreme diminished with respect to couples at the two extremes of the age range.

When we looked at the overall acceptance rates of couples in relation to whether or not they had children we found few differences. On breaking down these data, however, it was interesting to find that couples who had already adopted one or two children were more apt t be accepted than those who had not adopted, whereas couples with natural children tended to be accepted less often than those couples who had no children of their own. We wondered--and this was purely speculation--whether this was due to social workers' feeling that the introduction of an adopted child into a house which already included a natural child was a more difficult situation for the adoptive child and for most couples, and that, therefore, more stringent standards were applied to this group of applicants. It was also possible that since this was a special group of applicants, namely ones who already had children of their own, the social workers were responding to some qualitative difference which made them poorer prospects for adoptive parenthood. We did not know the answer, but hoped that here was an area where further self-scrutiny on the part of agencies might be extremely valuable in order to be sure that they were not excluding a group for reasons that were extraneous to their potential for filling the adoptive parent role.

When we looked at applicants' backgrounds we noticed that the majority of applicants stemmed from multiple sibling family constellations, and tended not to be the first born. We wondered whether this meant that such couples were more attuned to children and therefore more likely to be motivated to adopt.

On the medical side, couples were more likely to be accepted by the agencies if the medical prospects of having their own child were deemed doubtful or impossible. Although we were fully cognizant of the possible psychological complexities involved, we could not help wondering whether there may have been at times too much stress in this area without commensurate knowledge. For instance, do we know whether it is so likely to be detrimental to the adoptee if a couple adopts and then has a child of their own? No doubt the situation inherently would have many problem potentials, but would they materialize? Possibly here was another group of potential adopters that were at present too apt to be turned away.

The median amount of time between confirmation of inability to have a child and the couples' initial contact with an adoption agency was 16 months. This seemed to support the idea that psychologically a period of time was necessary in order to come to terms with the inability to conceive and the decision to adopt. An alternative explanation, however, was that agency philosophy with regard to this question had somehow been communicated to couples so that they either tended to be discouraged from contacting agencies too quickly or were not granted an interview if they did.

When we looked at applicant preferences we noted that two-thirds of a very small group of applicants who requested children "over five years of age" were considered poor prospects for adoption. Although we assumed that these ratings were in response to the qualifications of the applicants, in light of the need for couples who can accept older children, we could not but wonder whether there was some unstated expectation that applicants should want younger children (since most of them do have such a preference). It is also of course possible that such couples might indeed have had a variety of deficiences which influenced the caseworkers' ratings. This was of course purely impressionistic. This is a question that might warrant further examination.

Finally, we noted with no great surprise the relationship between a positive rating of adoptive applicants and the applicants' readiness to reveal the adoption status to a child at an early age. This rated ability of applicants to transmit information to the child about his biological background was more highly related to a positive impression of the couples as prospects for adoptive parenthood than was their comfort in receiving such information from the agency. It therefore appeared that, as between these two variables, the freedom of early communication between adoptive parent and child was regarded as of great significance in the assessment of the couples.

Caseworker Impressions and Agency Outcome

The majority of couples in our total sample were rated by the caseworkers as outstanding or good prospects for adoptive parenthood, although there was a greater tendency for caseworkers to use the "Good Prospects" category. This was no surprise since the inherent difficulties in judging parental capacity, particularly in those numerous instances where couples were not already in a parental role, probably resulted in some hesitancy to use an extreme judgment. This interpretation gained support by our finding that the agency with the highest reapplicant rate also used the largest proportion of extreme judgments. Of course we could not lose sight of the fact that this result may have been a function of the qualifications of the applicants.

Of major importance was our data on agency outcome. Contrary to the common idea among many groups in the community that agencies spend much of their time rejecting applicants, we found that in the overall sample, despite some distinct variations among the agencies, the majority of couples were accepted. This may partly have been accounted for by self-selection or screening-out of the less appropriate couples by agency procedures prior to the first interview. Nevertheless, of those couples who were seen at agencies for at least one interview, the majority received a child for adoption. This gave some credence to our suspicion that the myth of agencies busying themselves in the rejection process may be due to the fact that the dissatisfied are often more vocal than those who are satisfied. We felt that the continuation of the myth, however, raised some important public relations implications for consideration by the agencies. For instance, we wondered whether more time should be devoted to couples who are turned away from agencies in order to counteract the rejecting agency image. This seemed to us to have particular merit in order to avoid discouraging couples from approaching agencies at a time when the field must build applicant resources to match the needs of the increasing numbers of children who need adoptive homes.

We also speculated whether the rejected group of applicants were often those who next turned toward independent sources for adoption in their quest for a child. If such were true it would seem to be an extremely important child welfare service to allocate more time to this group of applicants in order to build such a relationship with the agency as to encourage this group to turn to agencies for any service that might be needed in the future. Since this group is by and large a disappointed one, with none too kindly feelings toward agencies, it might entail a more aggressive reaching-out approach, that might well be worth both time and effort.

The Adoption Caseworkers

In contrast to the idea that social workers tend to be single, over one-half of the adoption workers who participated in the study were married, and their median age was 41. Only 37 percent of the group had reared any children of their own, which possibly made the task of making judgments about parenthood more difficult, yet certainly was not a criterion against professionals rendering such judgments. Over half of the group had Master's degrees, but there was considerable variation among the agencies in this respect. Of interest was the fact that with regard to the proportion of workers with graduate degrees there was essentially no difference between the public and private agencies, although we noted that the public agencies had a larger proportion of staff at the low end of the education range. This education data concerned us somewhat, for despite our awareness of the lack of trained staff in the field at large, resulting in considerable competition among agencies for such staff, we noted a number of agencies were using professionaly untrained and partially trained workers for the specialized and skilled task of assessing adoptive applicants.

Despite supervisory guidance and in-service training approaches it seemed that there were two avenues here that needed serious thought and exploration. First, the need for trained personnel suggested that schools of social work might take a more active role in encouraging students in the direction of child welfare by incorporating into their training programs a greater emphasis on child welfare, and specifically the area of adoption, with special opportunities developed for training for the public services. In line with this it seemed to us that adoption facilities have become so enmeshed in meeting the pressures of the job to be done that too little time has been devoted toward developing field work opportunities which might, in the long run, serve as an indirect recruiting device for those students who have received such training.

Despite sizeable differences with respect to the amount of employment experience in the whole field of social work, the median fell at about eight and one-half years, with the median number of years in the child welfare field slightly over five years, and in adoption about three years. We noted considerable variation among the agencies, and a tendency for public agency staffs to have had less adoption experience than the caseworkers in the private agencies. We assumed that this reflected the all too usual picture of public agencies having greater difficulties than voluntary agencies in hiring and retaining trained staff, along with the tendency of trained staff in public departments to move up the supervisory ladder fairly quickly, and the comparatively recent entry of the public agencies into the adoption field in this metropolitan area.

We also noted that the most experienced adoption workers in our sample had accumulated their experience in one agency rather than as a result of various agency moves. This prompted us to speculate about the existence of a central core of agency culture, internal within each adoption facility, which is built up and maintained by a nucleus of long term staff who serve as transmitters of a particular agency's philosophy and style of operation to any newcomers on the scene.

The Children Placed for Adoption

The median amount of time between the first interview and the placement of a child in the homes of the accepted initial applicants in our sample was 7.9 months. We found considerable variation among the agencies in this regard, with public agencies tending to take longer in the placement process. Although we did not have data to support an interpretation, we conjectured that this may have been due to heavier caseloads and more administrative details in these agencies. We were interested that on the whole the lapse of time between initial interview and placement was not as extensive as has been alleged by some groups in the community who have leveled attacks against agencies for the supposed slowness of their operations. We even felt that it might be pointed out to such groups that such a time period is shorter than the normal gestation period of pregnancy.

The median age of the children at the time of placement was 4.7 months. We again found considerable variation among the eight agencies, with public placements tending to be above the median figure, while private agencies placed children at a younger age. It was encouraging to note that 67 percent of the placements occurred when children were six months of age or younger. This seemed a mark of progress in the agencies' movement toward early placements. On the other hand we were concerned that only 10 percent of the placements were of children one year old or over and a mere four percent were age two or more. Possibly this, too, reflected progress with respect to the placement of older children, yet seemed disappointingly small since the need for such placements has been great. Our proportions may also have been related to the number of older children referred for adoption from long-term foster care units, because of a traditional exclusion of children from adoption possibilities who have not been considered adoptable.[1]

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[1] Brown, F. G., Adoption of Children with Special Needs, New York: Child Welfare League of America, March 1958.

It was remarkable that 91 percent of the children had had only one boarding home experience prior to their adoptive placement. In view of the field's concern about children being shuttled from one to another foster home, our data were extremely encouraging and seemed to indicate that much headway has been made in this area. We were also cognizant, however, that the young age of most of the children placed may have in part accounted for this finding. After the first glow of enthusiasm we were also quick to remind ourselves that a selective process may have been operating. That is, we had to raise a question about what was happening to those children who had multiple boarding home placements. Maybe these children comprised the group who were either not available for adoption or who were not as likely to be given priority in being selected for adoptive placement. Perhaps for some reason they were considered more risky. Therefore our findings of so few boarding placements may have in large measure reflected availability as well as assessments as to which children would be the best candidates for adoptive placement.

Only 26 children of the over 200 placed for adoption with our applicant sample were of Negro or mixed racial origin. Although headway has been reported in this area, its movement has been slow, as has been progress in placing children across religious lines. With respect to the latter, it seems unlikely that we will see much change until there are alterations in those laws that now in large measure regulate agency operations, or a more child-focused interpretation of the "where practicable" restriction. As for the racial issue, present lags are probably a reflection of agencies' responsiveness to the value orientation of their applicants and the community at large, in addition to serious problems of recruitment and some difficulties in counteracting the relatively sizeable withdrawal rate among Negro applicants. This should pose quite a challenge to agencies both in the public relations domain and in experimenting with new ways of reaching, communicating and working with this much needed group of potential and actual adoptive applicants.

Caseworker Perceptions and Assessments of Adoptive Applicants

We scrutinized the underlying organization of caseworker ratings of adoptive applicants in our sample using a factor analytic approach. Three factors emerged from this analysis. We were somewhat surprised that so many variables that caseworkers had been asked to use to assess applicants could be reduced to three dimensions. Nevertheless even such a minimal yield meant that there was other than a halo operating and that there was an underlying structure guiding caseworker ratings as opposed to a random scatter of responses. Our results showed that workers were discriminating, but that the range within which workers made their judgments was a narrow one since the repertoire of constructs turned out to be a limited one.

This finding made sense in light of what Hunt[1] has spoken of as the limits on the capacity of the human being as a processor of information. In a similar vein, past studies of parent behavior,[2] have revealed the human limitation with regard to discrete evaluative ratings of perceptual data. This made us wonder whether in the adoption field we have at times made the error of endowing caseworkers with the task of making judgments about parental potential, when such a magical capacity should not be the expectation. Nor, possibly, should the field itself carry the burden of predictions about capacities to fill the parental role. Aside from the limits on information processing, it seemed important to raise the question of how workers can be expected to make predictions about parental behavior when in most instances they can only be guided by impressions based on observations of couples who are not at that time parents. One implication for practice of these clinical and perceptual limitations, and the resulting limited number of underlying constructs that appeared operative in the assessment of applicants, was that possibly a de-emphasis of the field's screening ability might be more in keeping with the realities of assessment capacities.

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[1] Hunt, J. McV., "On the Judgment of Social Workers as a Source of Information in Social Work Research," in Use of Judgments as Data in ~~Social~~ Social Work Research, New York: National Association of Social Workers, 1958, pp. 38-54.

[2] Roff, M., "A Factorial Study of the Fels Parent Behavior Scales," Child Development, 20, 1, March 1949, pp. 29-45; and, Lorr, M., and Jenkins, R. L., "Three Factors in Parent Behavior," Journal of Consulting Psychology, 17, 1953, pp. 306-08.

The three factors that emerged from our analysis were interpreted by us, at the positive pole, to mean 1) positive psychosocial appraisal, 2) suitability for a deviant child, and 3) young marriage. The first two of these were highly stable whereas the stability of the third was of moderate proportions. Therefore in our discussion here we will concentrate on the two key conceptual dimensions that were operating in the casework assessments of the adoptive applicants. The first of these was a major evaluative factor that appeared to be a holistic positive appraisal of the applicants rather than separate or distinct discriminations. This dimension related to couples who were considered generally good adoptive prospects, good for babies. Yet, curiously enough this was tied in with ruling them out for children who deviated in some way from the so-called normal child. The second major dimension in the applicant assessment process related to couples' suitability for children who deviated in some way. These tended to be the more marginal couples who, as it turned out, were considered more suitable for marginal children. We were struck here by the notion that the reason for this relationship was the result of caseworkers focusing more on the couples' caretaking function, with the stress on a job to be done.

Thus our factors pointed to three varieties of couple assessments, 1) the overall positive, 2) the marginal, and 3) the poor, or unacceptable. The most striking aspect of these findings was the clearcut separation between the overall positive appraisal dimension and the factor that related to assessed suitability for children who deviated in some way. Yet both of these were associated with a general positive rating of couples as prospects for adoptive parenthood. In other words, there were two alternative but non-simultaneous routes that led to a positive impression of couples as adoptive prospects, with the "better" couple seen as suitable for the "better" child and the marginal couple seen as more suitable for the marginal child. At first blush this seemed to raise an ethical question. It also contradicted some of the practice literature with its stress on the need for the "better" family to handle the problems that might arise with a marginal child. Apparently what is so voiced may not be followed in actual practice, though we were cognizant of the fact that we were here dealing only with worker assessments and not necessarily with what occurred during the final placement decision.

In conjecturing about these findings we could also arrive at a logical explanation for these divergent assessments. Most young couples come to an adoption agency with a desire for a normal healthy baby. It is certainly likely that caseworkers not only identify with, but respond to, such a preference. We also thought that probably the more identified workers were with certain couples, and these were the group who received the most positive overall appraisal, the less likely they would be to burden such couples with a child who deviated in some way. In addition we were aware of certain pressures that the worker-client situation inevitably imposed on adoption workers.

For instance, if workers are impressed by certain couples they were apt to hope that these couples would want to reapply for another child and hence the pressure on the workers to respond to their preferences. In addition we speculated whether psychologically it was possibly more difficult for a caseworker to place a child who deviates in some way into a home that she regards very positively, and conversely whether it was easier to do so with a couple considered marginal. There was also the possibility that a marginal couple at some level might be, in fact, better suited for a marginal child, maybe because of lower expectations, or some other reason. On the less impressionistic side we viewed adoption agencies as a product of our middle class culture, responding to pressures within a community in order to gain its support, and also incorporating some aspects of the value system of that environment, which includes values that are not wholly accepting of the deviant child. Such community pressures may also have influenced the findings we obtained, for it might be more in line with such values to place the marginal child with the marginal family.

With respect to the relative relationship of the three final factors to our criterion variable, the caseworkers' general impression of the couple as prospects for adoptive parenthood, we noted that the overall positive appraisal factor was three times as important as the factor that related to assessed suitability for a deviant child, with the young marriage factor of negligible importance in predicting the criterion.

The import of the first two factors lent further support to the idea of two separate routes by means of which adoptive applicants were assessed positively as prospects for adoptive parenthood.

The caseworkers' overall impression of couples as prospects for adoptive parenthood was most highly related to such assessed variables as the couples' openness, their empathy with respect to unmarried mothers, their comfort about revelation of the adoption status to a child, their positive marital interaction, and the wives' positive, outgoing personality. It seemed to us that these variables shared in common the idea of openness and communicativeness. We speculated whether this is what is so often designated as "warmth," so heavily stressed when one asks adoption workers what they look for in the selection of adoptive applicants. We were also somewhat surprised that ratings of non-neurotic or positive motivation for adoption was low in the hierarchy of associations with the general impression variable, which seemed contrary to the emphasis on motivation as voiced by the practice field. We saw no ready explanation for this except that possibly it is not so much positive motivation that is so important, but rather that assessed negative motivation is a contraindicator in forming a positive impression of couples as prospects for adoptive parenthood.

We were much interested in the finding that the husbands' assessed interest in and degree of confidence about the capacity to take on adoptive parenthood was significantly more strongly related to the caseworkers' overall impression of couples as prospects for adoptive parenthood than were the ratings of wives on these same variables. In other words, the workers' ratings of husbands in these two areas weighed more heavily than ratings of the wives when associated with our criterion variable, the workers' overall impression. This, we thought, implied that our caseworkers were looking at more than mere husband participation in the adoption process. Also implicated was the expectation of greater interest and confidence in adoption on the part of wives than husbands. Therefore greater stress may have been placed on husband assessments in these areas.

With respect to the factors that emerged, it is noteworthy that our eight agencies differed significantly among themselves in their ratings of applicants, with the primary contribution to this differentiation coming from the dimension that referred to assessments of suitability for the deviant child (Factor II) and secondarily from the overall psychosocial appraisal factor (Factor I). The eight agencies could be separated into two distinct groupings, with one set (two public and one private agency) giving on the average more positive ratings on factor I items and more negative ratings on factor II items, whereas in the other set of agencies, all private, the converse was operative. One public agency tended to hold a middle position. Factor III, young marriage, did not readily differentiate among the eight agencies. In other words, in our sample there were two distinct groups of agencies with divergent assessment tendencies. All but one private agency appeared to have different rating tendencies than the workers in the public agencies in our sample. The trend was for these public agencies to give, on the average, poorer ratings to couples with respect to suitability for children who differed in some way from the norm and more positive ratings on items that comprised the dimension of an overall positive psychosocial appraisal.

Although we could not offer any ready explanation for these findings and the data did not necessarily mean that there were divergent tendencies with respect to overall assessments of couples as prospects for adoptive parenthood, or that agencies could be grouped according to different acceptance and rejection tendencies, the data did imply that the caseworkers in the public facilities in our sample (and one private agency) were less ready to assess couples as suitable for the child who differed from the norm than private agencies. Did this mean that the latter group were more flexible in their ideas about who might be suitable for such a child, whereas in relation to a global psychosocial appraisal they tended to use more stringent standards? We wondered, for instance, whether public agency workers, on the average, were less willing to risk a positive judgment about suitability for the deviant child, and whether this seeming reluctance possibly stemmed from less encouragement of individual initiative and exploration of new methods by individual workers. One public agency did not show such a rating tendency, but they were closer to this than to the five private agencies. However, we thought that this finding suggested that all agencies, and particularly the public agencies, examine the area of individual initiative and freedom to try out new methodology. If such a reluctant tendency were so, did it, on the other hand, result in a tendency to lean in the opposite direction with regard to ratings of couples on the overall positive appraisal items? Or were there staff differences in the public and private agencies (such as the somewhat larger proportion of public staff at the lower end of the education range, their tending to have less adoption work experience, etc.) that had some bearing? Or did our findings reflect similar rating tendencies but divergent applicant groups coming to these agencies? Earlier we noted a few areas where there were descriptive differences in the applicant sample who were interviewed by the public and private agencies, such as in educational level and at the upper end of the income range, but these alone did not seem to offer an adequate explanation for the divergent tendencies noted here. At this point we leave further speculation about these interesting findings to the field itself in the hope that further self-questioning and scrutiny will result in some compelling answers.

A Final Note

The investigator could not gain a sense of closure in this report without making a few comments about future research possibilities and needs that grow directly out of this study.

The first area that looms large is the whole question of replication. In social work, replication studies have too often been relegated to a step-child position in our quest to build up a body of research by ever turning toward new areas for exploration rather than firming up, through repetition, what has already been studied. It would be interesting, for instance, to repeat this study in our eight agencies in the near future in order to note how similar the results would be. Timing would be essential in order not to confound the results by changing agency practices, although a focus on the latter would, in itself, be of interest. Similarly, replicating this study in other regions of the country merits attention so that there might be greater freedom to generalize findings and/or spot differences among various geographic areas.

Of enormous concern for future research is the question of validation of some of our findings. A study such as this one lends itself quite naturally to a future follow-up study of the couples in our sample. With respect to couples with whom the agencies placed children it would be of value to learn how they and their adoptees are functioning. Needless to say, this would be an extremely difficult task and proper evaluative measures would have to be developed. It would be of equal interest to find out what happened to those couples in our sample who withdrew or were rejected by the eight agencies. With such data available we could begin to focus on the validity of current agency selection procedures.

Some other intriguing areas of inquiry might be 1) a closer scrutiny of adoption workers in order to highlight ways in which idiosyncratic personality traits may be affecting the assessments made by caseworkers, 2) a comparison of ratings of couples across time, such as at initial and terminal interviews in a home study, in order to see whether such ratings do change or whether the initial interview essentially sets the stage for subsequent confirmation by further interviews, 3) an analysis of self ratings and adoption worker assessments of a group of applicants in order to compare similarities and differences in the underlying organization of such ratings, 4) an examination of the pool of children awaiting placement at each agency in order to determine the ways in which this may be affecting not only acceptance and rejection rates in general, but which couples are considered qualified to assume the adoptive parent role, 5) singling out a substantial sample of applicants who belong to minority groups in order to specify whether assessment tendencies and the criteria for selection differ in some way from such ratings in the overall group, and finally, 6) a comparison of adoption worker assessments with evaluations of couples based on their responses to various test materials. The latter would be of particular interest if some suitable tests could serve as an adjunct to the adoption study process, or if some test materials could be used as an early screening-in device. This could free more agency time for the task of seeing couples who have already adopted, of working with those couples who have been screened out but who might be potentially suitable for certain children, of working with couples who are rejected in an attempt to drain off some of their negative feelings about social workers and adoption agencies alike, and of reaching out into the community in order to develop new applicant groups.

We have listed just a few areas for further exploration. There are many more. Our ardent hope is that the study reported here will stimulate a quality of self-scrutiny and questioning that will eventuate in some of these ideas becoming a reality rather than remaining one investigator's dream.

APPENDIX A

Intercorrelation Matrix of First-Order Clusters

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	9	10	11
1	84	-26	53	44	-41	28	-68	34	-61	-51
2		70	-58	-56	24	-03	21	-24	57	33
3			70	58	-36	10	-43	34	-77	-42
4				62	-19	03	-43	41	-64	-31
5					36	-13	32	-17	34	28
6						33	-28	00	-14	-36
7							72	-23	62	63
9								43	44	-06
10									82	55
11										66
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1	54	-25	-70	72	82	-16	-54	-03	72	-45
2	27	72	54	-38	-26	38	54	-32	-21	36
3	01	-54	-69	60	52	-41	-67	20	42	-50
4	-03	-49	-58	48	45	-35	-63	27	28	-33
5	-28	-23	44	-41	-40	12	31	-04	36	19
6	26	09	-05	22	26	14	-04	-13	39	-20
7	-39	25	59	-68	-71	10	55	02	-73	49
9	04	-29	-38	35	34	-17	-35	08	11	-14
10	-04	58	75	-71	-63	35	75	-24	-52	53
11	-24	31	49	-59	-55	08	50	01	-70	53
12	79	38	-17	30	51	25	06	-30	51	-10
13		76	56	-44	-24	42	61	-29	-18	31
14			85	-76	-71	42	80	-71	-54	50
15				80	74	-24	-66	-05	72	-48
16					86	-09	-58	02	75	-45
18						48	45	-30	02	25
19							80	-21	-48	47
20								32	-13	-12
21									90	-57
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	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33
1	-30	01	83	68	71	54	-02	39	62	-50	-67
2	00	-13	-25	-04	01	-41	-42	-32	26	65	48
3	-14	09	51	29	28	52	25	39	05	-68	-58
4	-22	17	45	21	17	36	30	41	-01	-56	-46
5	11	01	-42	-39	-35	-34	-06	22	-28	33	44
6	-04	-21	24	37	31	28	-07	00	30	-18	-28
7	17	07	-69	-60	-57	-61	08	-25	-45	61	68
9	-16	28	29	09	09	12	18	39	08	-20	-19
10	21	-13	-60	-35	-31	-61	-28	-47	-10	79	70
11	11	21	-52	-51	-47	-66	-03	-09	-28	70	71
12	-23	-18	60	68	69	21	-34	00	78	03	-29
13	-02	-18	-19	03	08	-36	-40	-35	32	66	48
14	22	-17	-67	-44	-47	-56	-10	-50	-25	70	70
15	-16	-07	70	57	56	67	01	30	37	-70	-77
16	-28	00	84	69	72	61	-03	40	59	-57	-74
18	05	-24	-12	14	07	-12	-16	-31	25	33	16
19	22	-13	-52	-31	-28	-58	-22	-43	-03	75	65
20	03	18	-01	-18	-19	04	31	19	-27	-23	-09
21	-16	-38	73	77	74	78	-09	03	57	-63	-79
22	-14	07	-47	-38	-36	-57	-12	-11	-18	60	62
23	43	-02	-26	-23	-26	-15	-04	-21	-17	14	09
24		60	-02	-27	-23	-29	12	60	-18	04	15
25			84	71	73	57	-04	34	62	-53	-68
26				79	75	54	-16	06	71	-37	-64
27					81	49	-32	15	78	-30	-56
28						80	11	02	25	-77	-76
29							48	22	-39	-29	-10
30								66	08	-29	-25
31									85	-01	-37
32										98	83
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	34	35	36	37	38	39	40	41	42	43
1	-54	50	-22	-34	70	38	-64	-58	-16	-58
2	61	03	66	64	-51	-28	-31	18	48	46
3	-66	20	-58	-61	65	43	-53	-43	-42	-53
4	-54	22	-46	-51	57	38	-43	-40	-30	-45
5	38	-30	19	23	-44	-26	39	31	14	35
6	-19	25	-07	-15	22	24	-18	-18	-02	-17
7	62	-40	37	49	-67	-38	55	51	31	61
9	-19	21	-10	-19	36	15	-20	-20	03	-24
10	78	-24	65	71	-77	-48	57	47	45	66
11	72	-26	55	60	-60	-42	52	45	40	59
12	-06	51	30	18	24	10	-38	-37	14	-21
13	61	14	65	64	-47	-18	28	24	48	42
14	70	-34	53	59	-74	-49	64	53	37	63
15	-70	35	-48	-58	71	44	-59	-59	-34	-66
16	-61	47	-28	-43	76	41	-66	-64	-20	-64
18	29	-01	39	35	-20	-24	12	11	31	18
19	73	-22	65	69	-70	-52	56	46	42	62
20	-21	-10	-28	-23	15	08	-02	-00	-20	-11
21	-65	43	-40	-51	67	41	-58	-56	-28	-65
22	60	-11	51	56	-54	-31	41	33	37	53
23	12	-33	07	13	-25	-32	25	17	01	16
24	03	-04	04	04	04	-05	-06	08	02	02
25	-58	48	-25	-36	72	38	-69	-62	-22	-62
26	-42	52	-09	-23	53	31	-59	-53	-07	-50
27	-35	48	-04	-16	50	31	-57	-50	03	-45
28	-76	28	-62	-73	70	49	-49	-49	-44	-66
29	-29	-13	-35	-33	19	02	04	00	-24	-11
30	-30	16	-18	-24	41	22	-34	-26	-10	-28
31	-09	51	26	12	30	13	-50	-42	26	-24
32	95	-12	91	93	-77	-55	57	48	64	73
33	84	-27	64	70	-76	-47	66	60	47	73
34	93	-17	83	84	-79	-53	60	51	61	75
35		58	09	00	32	43	-37	-32	07	-28
36			94	91	-57	-48	37	29	63	55
37				91	-68	-51	46	38	60	64
38					82	51	-64	-56	-41	-72
39						57	-45	-35	-28	-43
40							70	57	18	54
41								55	20	39
42									58	40
43										68

APPENDIX B

CHILD WELFARE LEAGUE OF AMERICA, INC.

44 East 23rd Street, New York 10, New York

CASEWORKERS' RATING FORM FOR ADOPTIVE APPLICANTS

The purpose of this form is to secure ratings by caseworkers of adoptive applicants who have been seen for at least one interview. In other words, no one who has been seen in your adoption department for an initial interview while this study is being conducted, should be omitted. In order to provide as much information as possible, this form should be filled out following the last interview in the study process, whether that is the first, third, sixth, or whatever interview.

In completing this form, we are interested in your own assessment of the particular couple that you have just seen. Therefore, please complete the form as soon after the last interview as possible, and do not wait for an "official" decision by the agency about the couple.

We hope that you will not confer with other workers about particular ways of answering the questions. We are interested in your own opinions, since you know each couple best. It is also probably best to complete the form i one "sitting" whenever possible.

You will most likely find some of the questions in this form difficult to answer, because you may not have enough information or because you may not feel confident about a particular answer. Nevertheless, please be sur to answer all questions. If you are not confident about your answer please answer the question anyway and write a G (standing for guess) in the marg next to your answer. If you cannot even make a guess because you lack th necessary information, then write "Don't Know" in the margin. But pleas use "Don't Know" sparingly, as your guess or hunch, even when based on minimum of information will be of value for the study.

If you have any questions, please call Trudy Bradley, Project Director, a ALgonquin 4-7410.

THIS MATERIAL IS TO BE KEPT
ABSOLUTELY CONFIDENTIAL

1. **Name of Applicants (optional):**______________________________

2. **Agency Case #:**_______________

3. **Caseworker:**___________________________________

4. **Principal source of referral to this agency (PLEASE CHECK ONE):**

   1 ☐ **A family member**
   2 ☐ **A friend**
   3 ☐ **A doctor**
   4 ☐ **A minister, priest, rabbi**
   5 ☐ **A social agency**
   6 ☐ **Another division of your agency (e. g., foster care)**
   7 ☐ **Other (SPECIFY):**____________________________
   8 ☐ **Don't know**

5. **Number of interviews couple has had (joint or individual, with one or more workers) during their current contact with this agency's adoption staff. (PLEASE CIRCLE):**

   1 2 3 4 5 6 7

6. **Have they been known to any other division (such as foster care) of this agency? Yes ☐1 No ☐2**

7. **If "Yes", please specify when and under what circumstances:**________________
____
____

8. **Is this an initial application for adoption to this agency? Yes ☐ No ☐**

   a. **If "Yes", have they had contact with other adoption facilities and/or means of adoption?**

   1 ☐ **No**
   2 ☐ **Yes, previously adopted child from another agency**
   3 ☐ **Yes, previously adopted child from private sources**
   4 ☐ **Yes, previously rejected by another agency**
   5 ☐ **Yes, previously withdrew from another agency**
   6 ☐ **Yes, previously withdrew after exploring private resources**
   7 ☐ **Other (SPECIFY):**____________________________

   b. **If "No", what was the nature of their previous contact with this agency?**

   1 ☐ **Previously adopted child from this agency**
   2 ☐ **Previously rejected by this agency**
   3 ☐ **Previously withdrew from this agency**
   4 ☐ **Previous contact with this agency but also have had contact with other agencies and/or means of adoption (PLEASE SPECIFY):**
____
____

16. Nationality: **Husband** **Wife**

a. ____________________ **b.** ____________________

17. Race (CHECK ONE):

1 ☐ Couple same race: White
2 ☐ Couple same race: Negro
3 ☐ Couple same race: Other (What?) ____________________
4 ☐ Couple of mixed race: White-Negro
5 ☐ Couple of mixed race: White-Other (What?) ____________________
6 ☐ Couple of mixed race: Negro-Other (What?) ____________________
7 ☐ Couple of mixed race: Other (What?) ____________________

18. Religion (CHECK ONE):

1 ☐ Couple same religion: Catholic
2 ☐ Couple same religion: Jewish
3 ☐ Couple same religion: Protestant
4 ☐ Couple same religion: Other (What?) ____________________
5 ☐ Couple of mixed religion: Catholic-Jewish
6 ☐ Couple of mixed religion: Jewish-Protestant
7 ☐ Couple of mixed religion: Protestant-Catholic
8 ☐ Couple of mixed religion: Catholic-Other (What?) ____________________
9 ☐ Couple of mixed religion: Jewish-Other (What?) ____________________
X ☐ Couple of mixed religion: Protestant-Other (What?) ____________________

19. Duration of present marriage:

1 ☐ Under 2 years
2 ☐ 2-4 years
3 ☐ 4-6 years
4 ☐ 6-8 years
5 ☐ 8-10 years
6 ☐ 10-12 years
7 ☐ 12-14 years
8 ☐ 14-16 years
9 ☐ 16-18 years
X ☐ Other (SPECIFY): ____________________

20. Marital history for both spouses (CHECK ONE):

1 ☐ First marriage for both spouses
2 ☐ First marriage for wife, husband previously divorced or marriage annulled
3 ☐ First marriage for wife, husband previously widowed
4 ☐ First marriage for husband, wife previously divorced or marriage annulled
5 ☐ First marriage for husband, wife previously widowed
6 ☐ Both husband and wife previously married, both divorced or marriage annulled
7 ☐ Both husband and wife previously married, both widowed
8 ☐ Both husband and wife previously married, one widowed, the other divorced or marriage annulled

30. Was either member of the couple reared in a "broken" home? (Broken is defined as any discontinuity in being raised with both natural parents until age 16) (PLEASE CHECK):

Husband: Yes ☐ 1 No ☐ 2 Wife: Yes ☐ 1 No ☐ 2

31. If "Yes", give main reason for break (PLEASE CHECK):

a. Husband		b. Wife
1 ☐	Parents divorced	☐ 1
2 ☐	Parents died	☐ 2
3 ☐	One parent died	☐ 3
4 ☐	Parents separated	☐ 4

32. Give approximate age at which major break occurred:

a. Husband:________________ b. Wife:________________

33. Usual occupation of:

a. Husband's father:________________________________
b. Husband's mother:________________________________
c. Wife's father:________________________________
d. Wife's mother:________________________________

34. Now would you please rate the general "climate" of the homes in which each spouse was reared as to its "warmth" and its "restrictiveness". (PLEASE CHECK):

a. WARMTH of climate in which HUSBAND was reared:

1 ☐ Very warm
2 ☐ Moderately warm
3 ☐ Neutral
4 ☐ Moderately cold
5 ☐ Very cold

b. RESTRICTIVENESS of climate in which HUSBAND was reared:

1 ☐ Very restrictive
2 ☐ Moderately restrictive
3 ☐ Neutral
4 ☐ Moderately lenient
5 ☐ Very lenient

c. WARMTH of climate in which WIFE was reared:

1 ☐ Very warm
2 ☐ Moderately warm
3 ☐ Neutral
4 ☐ Moderately cold
5 ☐ Very cold

d. RESTRICTIVENESS of climate in which WIFE was reared:

1 ☐ Very restrictive
2 ☐ Moderately restrictive
3 ☐ Neutral
4 ☐ Moderately lenient
5 ☐ Very lenient

5. Did either member of the couple suffer any moderate or severe deprivation in their childhood? Yes ☐ 1 No ☐ 2

a. If "Yes", please specify what it was:________________________________

____

____

____

41. Please give approximate age at which each member of the couple began dating:

a. Husband:________________ b. Wife:________________

42. How often did each of them date (before meeting each other)? (PLEASE CHECK):

a. Husband		b. Wife
1 ☐	Never	☐ 1
2 ☐	Seldom	☐ 2
3 ☐	Occasionally	☐ 3
4 ☐	Often	☐ 4
5 ☐	Frequently	☐ 5

43. We are interested in learning how sexual education was handled with the husband and wife by their families. (PLEASE CHECK THE CATEGORY THAT APPLIES):

a. Husband		b. Wife
1 ☐	No opportunity to discuss sexual questions	☐ 1
2 ☐	Very little opportunity to discuss sexual questions	☐ 2
3 ☐	Moderate opportunity to discuss sexual questions	☐ 3
4 ☐	Considerable opportunity to discuss sexual questions	☐ 4
5 ☐	Extensive opportunity to discuss sexual questions	☐ 5

44. At about what age did they acquire basic sexual information?

a. Husband:________________ b. Wife:________________

45. Any other comments about significant factors in the husband's or wife's background or in their psychosexual development?________________

____

____

46. Would you say that these applicants pose any risk with respect to their physical health status? (PLEASE CHECK)

a. Husband		b. Wife
1 ☐	Above average risk	☐ 1
2 ☐	Moderate risk	☐ 2
3 ☐	Very little risk	☐ 3

47. What would you say about the attitudes of this couple toward their own general health? (PLEASE CHECK)

a. Husband		b. Wife
1 ☐	Overly concerned	☐ 1
2 ☐	Somewhat concerned	☐ 2
3 ☐	Reasonable	☐ 3
4 ☐	Somewhat neglectful	☐ 4
5 ☐	Very neglectful	☐ 5

53. The wife has been pregnant (PLEASE CHECK):

1 ☐ Never
2 ☐ One time
3 ☐ Two times
4 ☐ More than twice

54. This last occurred:

1 ☐ During the past 2 years
2 ☐ 2-4 years ago
3 ☐ 5-7 years ago
4 ☐ More than 7 years ago

55. The pregnancy(ies) resulted in:

1 ☐ A miscarriage
2 ☐ A stillbirth
3 ☐ A Caesarean operation
4 ☐ A normal birth
5 ☐ Other (SPECIFY): ____________________

56. Although it goes without saying that couples who come to adoption agencies are interested in adopting a child, nonetheless the degree of such interest varies from couple to couple, and may change through time. PLEASE PLACE A CHECK next to the statement that in your opinion most adequately describes the husband's and wife's interest in adoption according to the information you have about them at this time.

a. Husband		b. Wife
1 ☐	Appears very certain of the desire to adopt	☐ 1
2 ☐	Appears rather certain of the desire to adopt	☐ 2
3 ☐	Appears quite ambivalent about adoption	☐ 3
4 ☐	Appears undecided about the desire to adopt	☐ 4

57. To what extent does the couple exude confidence about their capacity to take on adoptive parenthood? If they already have adopted one child, then answer this in terms of their confidence in becoming adoptive parents a second time. PLEASE CHECK for husband and wife.

a. Husband		b. Wife
1 ☐	Much confidence	☐ 1
2 ☐	Moderate confidence	☐ 2
3 ☐	Relatively little confidence	☐ 3
4 ☐	Very little confidence	☐ 4

62. Did the couple have any stated preference with respect to the sex, appearance, nationality, religious background, intelligence, etc., of the child they desire to adopt? (PLEASE ANSWER FOR EACH characteristic and specify details in the space provided):

	Strength of Preference				Nature of Preference
	Strong	Moderate	Mild	No	(Give details)
a. Sex					
b. Intelligence . .					
c. Ethnic Background . .					
d. Religious Background . .					
e. Physique . . .					
f. Coloring . . .					
g. Health					
h. Others (SPECIFY) ____________ ____________ ____________					

63. During the course of your study, did any changes occur in either member of the couple with respect to any of the preferences listed above? (PLEASE SPECIFY): ____

____

64. Did the couple mention any characteristics of either the child or his background that they specifically did not want? Yes ☐ 1 No ☐ 2

a. If "Yes", please specify: ____

____

____

65. In your opinion, to what degree is the couple, at this point in time, flexibl in their willingness to accept a reasonable range of children which the agency is likely to have available? (PLEASE CHECK)

a. Husband:	b. Wife:
1 ☐ Very flexible	1 ☐ Very flexible
2 ☐ Moderately flexible	2 ☐ Moderately flexible
3 ☐ Moderately inflexible	3 ☐ Moderately inflexible
4 ☐ Very inflexible	4 ☐ Very inflexible

67. IF this is a couple who have children of their own and are not infertile, PLEASE CHECK HERE and go on to question 72: ________

68. Below are a list of statements regarding a couple's feelings about infertility and/or inability to have children of their own. FOLLOWING EACH STATEMENT, PLEASE CIRCLE THE NUMBER THAT MOST APPLIES TO THIS COUPLE:

	Very much so	Moderately so	Mildly so	Probably Not
a. Are able to discuss their feelings about infertility with each other.	1	2	3	4
b. Their feelings about infertility have been a source of conflict in their marital relationship	1	2	3	4
c. The couple's statement about the source of their infertility is in agreement with the medical findings	1	2	3	4
d. The wife, husband, or both feel ill at ease about their infertility	1	2	3	4
e. The wife, husband, or both feel that they may yet be able to have a child of their own although the medical findings indicate otherwise	1	2	3	4
f. The wife, husband, or both feel inadequate as people because of their infertility	1	2	3	4
g. Their sense of masculinity and/or femininity seems to be impaired to some extent	1	2	3	4
h. They seem to have come to grips (achieved some resolution) with whatever conflicts or problems emerged as a result of their infertility.	1	2	3	4

69. They tend to cope with their feelings about infertility by the following mechanisms (PLEASE CHECK THOSE THAT APPLY):

HUSBAND	WIFE
a. 1 ☐ Denial	b. 1 ☐ Denial
2 ☐ Intellectualization	2 ☐ Intellectualization
3 ☐ Projection	3 ☐ Projection
4 ☐ Rationalization	4 ☐ Rationalization
5 ☐ Other (SPECIFY): ________	5 ☐ Other (SPECIFY): ________
6 ☐ None apply	6 ☐ None apply

70. If the couple's statement about the reason for their infertility is not in agreement with medical findings, would you please state what are the discrepancies? ____

____

____

75. In their interviews at the agency have they always felt this way?
Yes ☐ 1 No ☐ 2

76. If there has been a change in their attitude, what is it? ____________________
____

77. Would you say that they are comfortable about the idea of receiving information from the agency about the child's biological parents?

1 ☐ Very comfortable
2 ☐ Moderately comfortable
3 ☐ Probably not comfortable

78. Would you say that the amount of such information they want is:

1 ☐ Above average amount
2 ☐ Average amount
3 ☐ Below average amount

79. Would you predict that they will be able to talk comfortably to the child about his biological parents?

1 ☐ Very comfortably
2 ☐ Moderately comfortably
3 ☐ Probably not comfortably

80. Now we would like to have your estimate of this couple's socio-economic situation. Given the statements below, how would you rate this couple? PLEASE CHECK THE STATEMENT THAT APPLIES--CHECK ONE ONLY:

1 ☐ They are well-to-do or better; able to afford considerable number of luxuries, high priced home, trips abroad, etc.

2 ☐ They are comfortable; the comforts and necessities of life are taken for granted; have good margin of savings for special needs.

3 ☐ They have adequate income but have to plan carefully for special needs, e.g., college tuition, purchase of home, special vacations, etc.

4 ☐ They have moderately adequate income but are able to afford few luxuries; difference between family income and "extra" cash reserve is very small.

5 ☐ They have less than adequate income; indebtedness has been common; family has a fair amount of worry about not having adequate income.

82. Below are some phrases and adjectives that are sometimes used in describing people. PLEASE CIRCLE THE NUMBER THAT, in your clinical judgment, comes closest to the degree to which each spouse seems to possess the quality listed.

Very much so: 1
Moderately so: 2
Mildly so: 3
Probably not: 4

	Husband		Wife	
(a)	1 2 3 4	Emotionally stable	1 2 3 4	(u)
(b)	1 2 3 4	Self-aware	1 2 3 4	(v)
(c)	1 2 3 4	Warm	1 2 3 4	(w)
(d)	1 2 3 4	Candid and open	1 2 3 4	(x)
(e)	1 2 3 4	Dominating	1 2 3 4	(y)
(f)	1 2 3 4	Accepting of self	1 2 3 4	(z)
(g)	1 2 3 4	Independent	1 2 3 4	(aa)
(h)	1 2 3 4	Ambitious	1 2 3 4	(bb)
(i)	1 2 3 4	Generous	1 2 3 4	(cc)
(j)	1 2 3 4	Spontaneous	1 2 3 4	(dd)
(k)	1 2 3 4	Assertive	1 2 3 4	(ee)
(l)	1 2 3 4	Flexible	1 2 3 4	(ff)
(m)	1 2 3 4	Sense of humor	1 2 3 4	(gg)
(n)	1 2 3 4	Sociable	1 2 3 4	(hh)
(o)	1 2 3 4	Moody	1 2 3 4	(ii)
(p)	1 2 3 4	Patient	1 2 3 4	(jj)
(q)	1 2 3 4	Nervous	1 2 3 4	(kk)
(r)	1 2 3 4	Outspoken	1 2 3 4	(ll)
(s)	1 2 3 4	Friendly	1 2 3 4	(mm)
(t)	1 2 3 4	Serious	1 2 3 4	(nn)

85. We would now like you to rate various aspects of a couple's marital relationship. From your knowledge of this couple, would you PLEASE CIRCLE THE NUMBER THAT most closely applies:

Very much so:	1
Moderately so:	2
Mildly so:	3
Probably not:	4

	Husband		Wife	
(a)	1 2 3 4	To what extent does the wife function adequately in her role as homemaker and the husband function adequately in his role as wage earner?	1 2 3 4	(o
(b)	1 2 3 4	To what extent does each get pleasure from functioning in his/her above role?	1 2 3 4	(p
(c)	1 2 3 4	To what extent has each member expressed satisfaction with their marital relationship?	1 2 3 4	(q
(d)	1 2 3 4	To what extent has each member been able to develop a marital life independent from their respective families?	1 2 3 4	(r
(e)	1 2 3 4	To what extent is each spouse able to meet the expectations of the other in their respective roles?	1 2 3 4	(s
(f)	1 2 3 4	To what extent does each spouse feel compatible with the other in their interests, goals and personal values?	1 2 3 4	(t)
(g)	1 2 3 4	To what degree do they display warmth and affection for each other?	1 2 3 4	(u
(h)	1 2 3 4	To what degree are they able to communicate their feelings to one another?	1 2 3 4	(v
(i)	1 2 3 4	To what degree do they show respect for each other's individuality?	1 2 3 4	(w
(j)	1 2 3 4	To what extent are they communicative in discussing their marriage?	1 2 3 4	(x
(k)	1 2 3 4	To what degree have they been able to cope with challenge and difficulty in their lives?	1 2 3 4	(y
(l)	1 2 3 4	To what degree do they exhibit behavior suggestive of potentially troublesome emotional problems?	1 2 3 4	(z
(m)	1 2 3 4	To what degree have they had enjoyable relationships with children?	1 2 3 4	(a
(n)	1 2 3 4	To what degree do they have meaningful spiritual values?	1 2 3 4	(b

94. Below are a list of statements that are sometimes used in describing parents' attitudes toward their child. PLEASE CIRCLE THE NUMBER THAT, comes closest to your assessment of the way you would expect the wife to relate to a child were she to adopt one:

		Very much so	Moderately so	Mildly so	Probably not
a.	Would anxiously turn to others to seek the answers for the everyday questions that come up in caring for a small child	1	2	3	4
b.	Would feel comfortable in responding to the dependency needs of a child	1	2	3	4
c.	Would tend to be over-protective	1	2	3	4
d.	Would not impose great demands for success upon her child	1	2	3	4
e.	Would be able to set limits for a child when needed	1	2	3	4
f.	Would have high expectations about the child's maturational development	1	2	3	4
g.	Would be supportive to a child's movement toward independence	1	2	3	4
h.	Would have an easier time relating to a boy than a girl	1	2	3	4
i.	Would make it her business to know everything her child is thinking about	1	2	3	4
j.	Would make every effort to have her child toilet trained at the earliest possible time	1	2	3	4
k.	Would want her own way most of the time with her child	1	2	3	4
l.	Would make high demands on the child regarding school accomplishments	1	2	3	4
m.	Would foster dependency in the child	1	2	3	4
n.	Would in most matters prefer strictness over leniency	1	2	3	4

96. (continued)

	The couple is very suitable for this kind of child.	The couple is fairly suitable for this kind of child.	The couple is not really suitable for this kind of child but I would select them if others are unavailable.	The couple is not suitable for this kind of child and I would never place such a child with them.
p. A Puerto Rican child	☐	☐	☐	☐
q. A child with a correctable cardiac disorder.	☐	☐	☐	☐
r. A Norwegian child	☐	☐	☐	☐
s. A slightly mentally retarded child	☐	☐	☐	☐
t. A Negro child	☐	☐	☐	☐
u. A child with a severe physical handicap	☐	☐	☐	☐
v. A child of mixed religious background	☐	☐	☐	☐
w. A child who is described as "homely" in appearance	☐	☐	☐	☐

97. We are also interested in your judgment about the ability of this couple to accept and cope with various behaviors and/or problems that may arise in the course of child development. PLEASE CIRCLE THE NUMBER that seems most closely to approximate this couple's ability to accept and cope with the following in the pre-school or early school years:

Ability to cope:
Very much so: 1
Moderately so: 2
Mildly so: 3
Probably not: 4

a. Slow physical development.	1	2	3	4
b. Borderline intellectual development	1	2	3	4
c. A withdrawn and shy youngster.	1	2	3	4
d. A relatively aggressive youngster	1	2	3	4
e. A youngster with a minor speech disorder.	1	2	3	4
f. A child with a somewhat strong sexual curiosity	1	2	3	4

100. Even in the most ideal situation, there are often some things about a couple that the caseworker, from a clinical viewpoint, may wish were different. If you were in a position to suggest ways or areas in which this couple might change in order to improve their chances of being selected as adoptive parents, what would you suggest? PLEASE CHECK THOSE THAT APPLY:

1 ☐ Some change in their living arrangement
2 ☐ Some change in their socio-economic situation
3 ☐ Some change in the wife's personality
4 ☐ Some change in the husband's personality
5 ☐ Some change in the way these two people relate to each other
6 ☐ Some change in their attitudes toward children
7 ☐ Some change in their attitudes toward parenthood
8 ☐ Some change in the amount of experience they have had with children
9 ☐ Some change in another area. Please specify:______________________

____

101. We would now like to get your over-all impression of this couple from what you know of them to date. PLEASE CHECK THE STATEMENT which, in your opinion, most nearly applies. (CHECK ONE):

1 ☐ I consider this couple to be outstanding prospects for adoptive parenthoo
2 ☐ I consider this couple to be good prospects for adoptive parenthood
3 ☐ I consider this couple to be fairly good prospects for adoptive parenthoo although I have some questions about them
4 ☐ I feel dubious about this couple as prospects for adoptive parenthood
5 ☐ I consider this couple to be poor prospects for adoptive parenthood

* * * * * * * * * * * *

102. In considering this couple as prospects for adoption:

a. What worries you most about them?

b. What do you like most about them?

CHILD WELFARE LEAGUE OF AMERICA, INC.
44 East 23rd Street, New York 10, New York

OUTCOME AND CHILD PLACEMENT FORM

Research Case #__________ Caseworker(s) - __________________

In order to complete our analysis of the questionnaire material, we need to know something about the outcome of this couple's contact with your agency. Would you please answer the questions below as fully as possible.

1. Outcome (please check)

- ☐ **Couple was accepted by the agency**
- ☐ **Couple was rejected by the agency**
- ☐ **Couple withdrew from the agency. They seemed like good prospects.**
- ☐ **Couple withdrew from the agency. They seemed like poor prospects.**
- ☐ **Other: WHAT? __________________________**

2. What were the reasons for the couple's being rejected, their withdrawing, etc. ?

(continued)

3. If the couple has been accepted by the agency, we would like to know something about the characteristics of the child (or children) placed with the family (if more than one child was currently placed with the family, please indicate):

   a. Date of placement:____________
   b. Sex: Male ☐ Female ☐
   c. Age at time of placement:____________
   d. Race of child's mother:____________
   e. Race of putative father:____________
   f. Nationality of descent:____________
   g. Religion of child's mother:____________
   h. Religion of putative father:____________
   i. Number of boarding home placements preceding the current adoptive placement:____________
   j. Number of institutional placements preceding the current adoptive placement:____________
   k. How long was child in placement prior to the adoptive placement?

   ____

   l. Would you say that this child deviates at all from the "normal" in terms of health, psychological factors, intellectual potential, or some other way? If so, how?____________

   ____

   ____

4. What religion did the couple designate as the one in which they plan to rear child, if one were placed in their home?

   ____

CHILD WELFARE LEAGUE OF AMERICA, INC.
44 East 23rd Street, New York 10, New York

CASEWORKER SELF-RATING FORM

Name: ____________________

1. Age: ________

2. Marital status:
- ☐ Single
- ☐ Married
- ☐ Divorced
- ☐ Separated
- ☐ Widowed

3. Do you have any children? ______ **If "Yes," how many?** ______

4a. How many years of education have you completed? ______

b. How much graduate social work training do you have? ______

c. What degree(s) do you have? ______

5a. How many years have you been employed as a social worker (not including any graduate field work)?

Full-time ______ **Part-time** ______

b. How many years have you worked in the field of child welfare?

Full-time ______ **Part-time** ______

c. How many years of experience have you had in the field of adoption?

Full-time ______ **Part-time** ______

6. How long have you been employed in your present work at this agency?

______

7. What is the title of your present position?

______

8. Are you full-time? ______

If "No," how many hours per week do you work at this agency? ______

9. Is your present caseload exclusively an adoption (home study) caseload or do you carry other types of cases (i.e., unmarried mothers, foster care)?

____

If not exclusively adoption, what percentage of time do you devote to adoption home studies?

____

12/16/63

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